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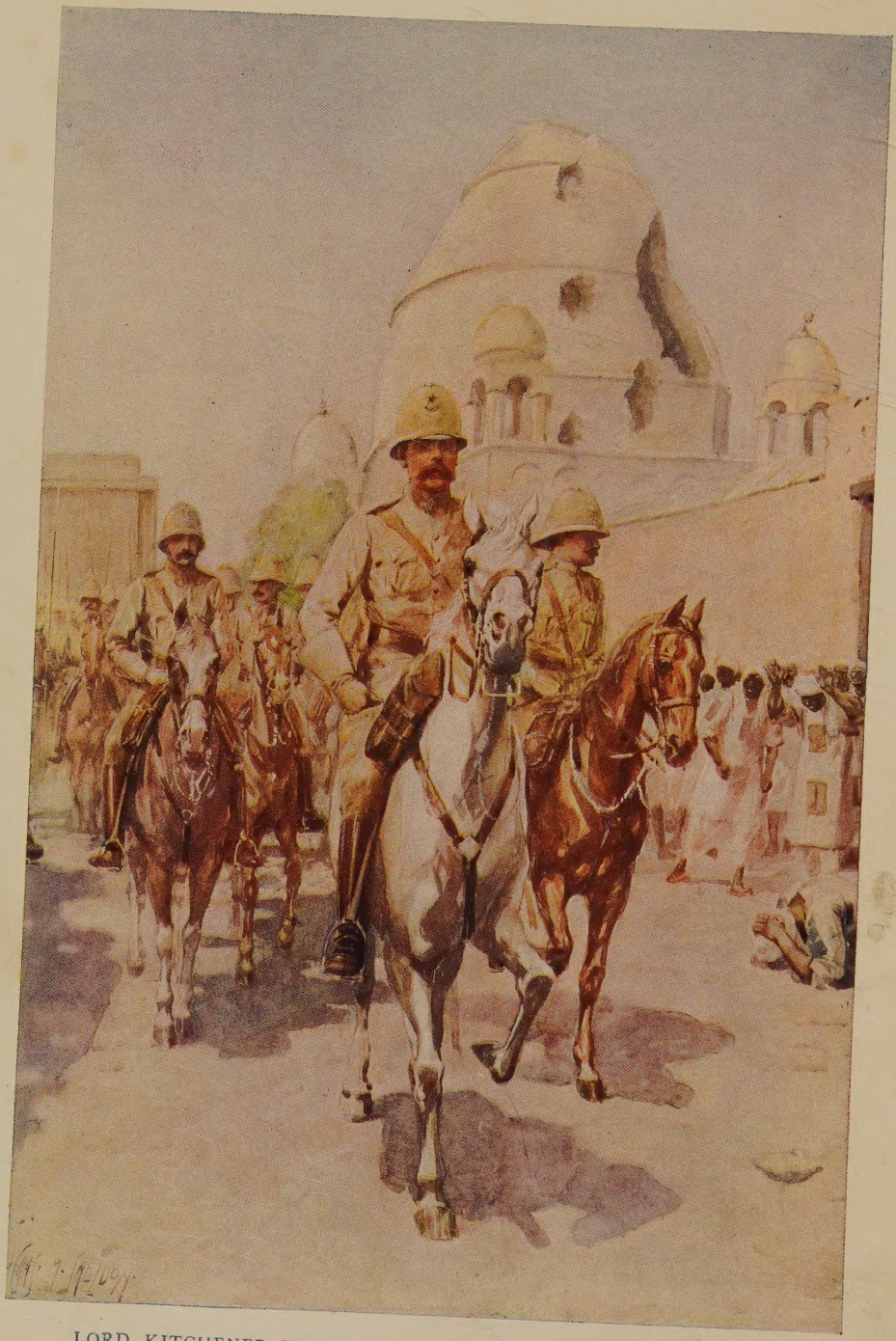
FIELD-MARSHAL
LORD KITCHENER



LORD KITCHENER ENTERING OMDURMAN AFTER THE BATTLE

From a painting by Charles M. Sheldon

FIELD-MARSHAL LORD KITCHENER

His Life and Work for the Empire

BY

E. S. GREW, M.A.

Author of "A History of the War with the Boers" &c.
Contributor to "The Great World War"

AND OTHERS

VOLUME I

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NOTE

The chapters are initialled by the several contributors, namely:—

E. S. G.	Edwin Sharpe Grew.
W. H.	Wentworth Huyshe.
G. T.	George Turnbull.

PUBLISHERS' NOTE

The whole of Lord Kitchener's life, seen in retrospect, is an ennobling lesson in duty and patriotism, discipline and efficiency. It is in the hope of revealing those deep-seated, sterling qualities, which made him ever ready to sacrifice all other things to the single aim of maintaining his country's honour and purpose, that the present life-story has been undertaken. The laborious steps by which Lord Kitchener rose to the place where he became the Empire's indispensable right arm in her hour of need are traced by writers who have been generously assisted in certain of the chapters by kinsfolk and friends of the late War Minister.

For his account of the Palestine period, which throws a flood of light on the character and mentality of the soldier-archæologist, Mr. Grew is indebted to the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, who kindly permitted him to make his illuminating extracts from Kitchener's letters and journals to the Society, as well as to reproduce one of the interesting photographs taken at the time by Kitchener himself. The quotations afford one of the most intimate self-revelations which Kitchener ever made in writing, and fully testify to the way in which the beauty, the interest, and the sentiment of the Holy Land had seized on their observer.

Mr. Turnbull, who in the present volume deals with

Kitchener's homes and ancestry (among other phases of the subject), is able to give a considerable amount of interesting information regarding the great soldier's early life, and his various estates both at home and abroad; while Mr. Wentworth Huyshe, War Correspondent for *The Times* in the Soudanese Campaign of 1885, writes with intimate knowledge of this and other stages of Lord Kitchener's military career. By these, and other contributors in the later volumes, the course of Lord Kitchener's romantic career is thus traced down to the closing tragedy off the Orkneys on the evening of June 5th, 1916.

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FIELD-MARSHAL LORD KITCHENER

CHAPTER I

The Man: His Character and Development

The Man and the Hour—"He inspired us all with the Utmost Confidence" — Kitchener and his Colleagues — Soldiers and the Leader — Popular Ideas of Kitchener—Revised Estimates—Labour's Tribute—Great Britain's Appreciation—The Prime Minister's Testimony—Kitchener's Personal Traits—The Words of his Friends—Continuous Evolution of Kitchener's Career and Powers—Eastern Influences—His Handling and Training of the Egyptian Army—Knowledge of the Soudan and Familiarity with its Problems—The Years of Preparation—Kitchener's Recognition of the Indispensability of a Strategic Railway—Omdurman and Khartoum: the End of the First Phase of his Career—His Exercise of Statesmanship—The Influence of the War in South Africa on his Future—Experiment in making a Modern Army in India—Kitchener and Greater Britain—Application of Theories of Modern Armies to Great Britain—The Test of the Great War and the Making of Imperial Armies.

HISTORY will not ask whether Lord Kitchener was a great soldier or a great organizer or a great administrator: it will know him for a great man. In the supreme crisis of Britain's history his countrymen turned to him as the one man whom the tremendous issues could not master, but who would be able to fashion the means with which to deal with them. They were confident of his devoted patriotism, his sleepless energy, his strength of will; but they

were confident, above all things, in the belief that these qualities would suffice in him for the work he had to do. Other men there have been who were great patriots and single-minded, strong of heart and will, who served Britain well; but among the others some stand isolated, because in them these qualities were joined for the sole purpose, it seemed, that they should be the instruments of their country's salvation in her hour of need. Of such was he.

The soldier who stood nearest to him in his last task, Lord French, and who spoke of him as a soldier—"the great and glorious soldier which I knew him to be"—put into words what the whole people felt of him: "He inspired us all with the utmost confidence, we relied upon him to lead us to victory, we knew we were assured of his utmost help and support in trouble and difficulty—and that he would give us the fullest measure of credit in success". The soldierly estimate detaches the last clause and lays stress on that characteristic in Lord Kitchener which made him just and generous in praise. But his countrymen divined it too, and one of the most shining tributes to him was that paid by a Labour member in the House of Commons, who, speaking on behalf of the Labour Party, said that what they felt of Lord Kitchener was that he was straight.

He was reputed a hard man, extreme to mark what was done amiss. Those who had failed knew that the bitterest part of their failure would be that of explaining it to him. "I cannot have the safety of my troops made dependent on a cast horse-shoe," he once told an officer whose horse had fallen lame in carrying dispatches; and he gave no one the opportunity to make a slip twice. But that was because he was engaged on a business where the best excuses were of no avail to alter facts, where victory could not be won merely by good intentions, and where success was the only thing by which a man could expect to be judged.

It was Kitchener's business to be hard. It was necessary to him to know that his orders would be obeyed without fail. "I can't face 'K' with a story like that," an officer was once heard to say of an occurrence in which there was a good reason why some delay in giving effect to Lord Kitchener's wishes should have taken place. The reason was a good one, the officer's personal responsibility in the matter was slight, but he knew that these considerations would not suffice for "K"; and it was because Kitchener knew how to assure obedience without fail that he could command events. It was thus that he got things done, and that he ensured against the breakdown of his plans, which were not to be disarranged by luck or negligence or the miscarriage of somebody else's good intentions.

In him there was the aloofness of all great men, which is the aloofness of the spirit rather than of the temper. The common conception of him as a stern, silent man with steely eyes and unapproachable manner was wide of the mark. He was neither stern nor silent with those who worked with him; he was receptive, sympathetic, and helpful with those who had his confidence, or who, with the right credentials, sought it. All his life his work had been cast among men who were not men of words but of deeds, often of violent deeds, and often men who would have thwarted him if they could. Such an experience does not contribute to urbanity; it armoured Kitchener against the approach of those whom he had not a good reason for trusting. Nor was his confidence lightly or easily given. He was never a man of many friends; the few he had he trusted without reservation, and for them would do anything; it is perhaps no less a tribute to the value of his trust and confidence that his friends would do anything for him.

But as he grew older, and time and death narrowed the circle of his intimates, he did not replace them. He was not expansive; he was by nature reserved; and, undemonstrative

himself, he retreated from demonstrativeness in others. But as a man to work with he captured confidence as he captured efficiency. Men believed in him; they did not stop to ask if he was generous, because they knew him to be just; and strong men and efficient men ask no more. It would be idle to deny that in the army he had critics. Lord French, who by his own admission did not always see eye to eye with him, was not the only one; but an army is an organism which by its nature and training is made up of units who are men of stubborn will and masterful inclinations. Even a Kitchener cannot dominate such an organism without arousing opposition or condemnation, and in his methods of governance persuasion was not a large factor. But he secured from his colleagues the most valuable kind of confidence—the confidence which arose from a belief in his strict efficiency. Kitchener's way might not be their way, but it was a way which would not fail. "We depended on him to help us," said Lord French; and no higher professional compliment was ever paid to Kitchener than Lord French's offer, revealed afterwards by Lord French himself, to go out to France as Lord Kitchener's Chief of Staff, instead of in the post of Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force, which had been designed for him.

The same confidence in Kitchener's ability ran through all ranks of the army. "None but Kitchener would have had the audacity to ask us to make regiments out of the raw material of the New Armies of 1914," said a colonel who had licked 1100 miners into a battalion, after beginning the task with the aid of two non-commissioned officers. But it was because the belief in Kitchener was so unshakable that when he gave men impossible tasks they undertook them—the tasks could not be impossible if Kitchener thought they must be done. This was the feeling with which he inspired the rank and file. They believed in him and trusted him. Even if they had thought themselves to be no more than the instru-

ments to carry out his purpose, they would know that their lives were precious to him because of the purpose, and that they would never be wasted.

They may have discerned, also, beneath the exterior which appeared to repel all sentiment or enthusiasm, the deep spring of sympathy and feeling which he was so careful not to betray. No leader ever made less bid for popularity. It was said of him that he was never known to speak to a private soldier—an exaggeration, doubtless, but one conveying accurately his relation to the mass of the armies he used. Yet when he rode by after the battle of the Atbara —the first great step on the long road—his troops cheered him and cheered again, unasked and unexpectedly — and greatly to his disconcertment. They often cheered him in after years, though his way always remained the same. There is one true story of him which has never before been told, but which seems to the writer who now tells it, to furnish the clue to that unsought love and admiration which the common soldier felt for the great man. When the news of Neuve Chapelle reached London, and the heavy tale of the losses became known to him, he was moved as none ever imagined of him. "My poor soldiers!" he repeated, "my poor soldiers!" and for hours he paced his room at the War Office alone. . . . To him there was one supreme need—his country's need. To that he gave his own life. To that he never scrupled to sacrifice the wills, the careers, the lives if need be, of others. But though his heart was steeled to the sacrifice, it was not unmoved by it.

Such was Lord Kitchener as the army which called him "K" knew him. To the public he was a figure drawn to the conventional pattern of the iron-hearted, iron-willed autocrat. Those who met him in ordinary life were always surprised to find how little correspondence there was between this conventional portrait and his everyday demeanour. He had an

unaffectedly cheerful manner; there was something in it that one would certainly describe as good-humoured; and he was communicative on subjects which interested him, though he had no small talk. He was very modest in giving his opinion on matters in which he was an accepted authority; but, provided his hearer was an expert on a subject, he was ready and even eager to discuss it with him, his mind being, like all fine minds, carnivorous, deriving sustenance by selecting and digesting the best material in other minds.

Even those who saw and heard him on such public occasions as Guildhall banquets might have seen reason to revise the popular portrait. He had, in later years, an unexpected deliberateness. His speeches were written, and the way in which he slowly rose, drew out a pair of large-rimmed spectacles, and adjusted them as a preliminary to reading his carefully-framed sentences, was always a surprise to those who saw and heard him for the first time. He very much disliked making these speeches, and gave himself an amount of trouble and worry in preparing them which was quite unnecessary, taking into account their formal and deliberately unspeculative character—they were seldom much more informing than a lengthened *communiqué*. He could make a speech of another kind. There was one which we heard him deliver on his return from Khartoum, and which, though very short, was statesmanlike in diction, and its admirable phrases enhanced by his deep, pleasant voice—another surprise always to those who heard him speak for the first time. But it was in converse freed from restraints that he was at his best; and he never failed to be equal to the occasion when he could meet those whom he had to convince or persuade, face to face, and speak to them as man to man. It was no mere fashion of speaking that made Mr. Hodge, the Labour representative, say that Labour thought Kitchener straight. Labour had met him, and he had "had it out" with them, being in this respect

more successful than some of Labour's chosen representatives or temporary heroes. He was not less happy when, on the eve of his death, he met his House of Commons critics in a Committee Room conference, and emerged from this ordeal with a success with which, as Mr. Asquith bore witness, he was boyishly pleased. To explain these triumphs something must be granted to his power of handling men. But there is more to be granted to the belief he inspired in his integrity, and in the certainty that the one thing which he would put before all others was the safety, honour, and welfare of his country.

To the people of his country, those inarticulate millions whose opinion finds expression slowly but irrevocably, one may turn for the truth about him with more confidence than to many individuals who knew Lord Kitchener in varying degrees of intimacy or acquaintanceship. The people judged him as he judged other men, not by externals, but by what he did. They prized in him those qualities of cool resolution and doggedness which they like to think are essentially British qualities; they condoned a suspected vehemence and impatience of opposition; and the questions of Kitchener's intellect or brilliance did not concern them at all. What they had in him above all other things was an undying trust that Kitchener, having taken a thing up, would see it through. In that he personified a British ideal; it was the hall-mark of his career. Throughout his life he was always seeing the job through. The first and greatest exemplification of this ability in him was in his work in Egypt—fourteen years of patient organization, of waiting, of making Egyptian riflemen out of mud, of convincing his superiors, of moulding his staff in order to get the weapons he wanted. His life-work seemed crowned at Khartoum; his countrymen never have forgotten, and never will, that there he wiped a stain from the British flag.

If the British public could have had its way, they would

have brought him to the War Office then and there, to begin a task which nobody has ever ended. But before that unsettled question could arise there was other work for him to do in South Africa. He went out to the Cape as Lord Roberts's Chief of Staff. What his value in that capacity was, his chief, Lord Roberts, testified. But the British people saw in him, besides, the man who was left with the task of tying up the loose ends. He did it in his irresistible, methodical way by his system of drives and blockhouses, and he did it in spite of all the imperfections of his raw material. In the Soudan he had rounded off his conquest by a piece of the most delicate and trying diplomacy at Fashoda, where he had to persuade Colonel Marchand to return to Europe without prejudice to Anglo-French relations. In South Africa, the attitude he took up to the Boer leaders at the Vereeniging Conference, and the advice he tendered afterwards with respect to the treatment of the Boer people now that the war had ended, proved to be examples of true statesmanship. The British nation did not forget these things. When, thereafter, he went to India as Commander-in-Chief, and spent seven years in carrying out his system of army reorganization there, in the teeth of criticism, and in spite of the opposition of the Viceroy, he carried his points; and the reason that he was able to do so was that in the last resort the British people, though knowing little or nothing of the points at issue, would have supported him. When his period of office in India ended, he accepted an appointment very incommensurate with his abilities at the desire of King Edward. After his release from this obligation, the Government could find no employment for him till the death of Sir Eldon Gorst offered him the post occupied by Lord Cromer when Kitchener had been Sirdar. Lord Kitchener took it, in lieu of that Viceroyalty of India, which was his ambition, and again turned his energies to the reform and reorganization of the land which he knew so well.

This was his task when the war with Germany broke out in August, 1914. He happened to be in England at the moment. It was clear to the country that there could be only one man to take charge of the unmeasured, unknown military responsibilities which the situation had created; and Mr. Asquith rightly interpreted the country's call. He sent for Lord Kitchener, stopping him by telegram as he was making his way to Dover in order to return to Egypt, and offered him the post of War Minister. The appointment at once reassured the public. It stilled apprehension; it inspired confidence; it roused enthusiasm; above all, it created a state of feeling in which it was certain that whatever Kitchener asked for, the country would give him. This unalterable confidence in him remained till the day of his death, and survived it, as it had survived many attacks, both open and covert, upon him. It was a confidence which reached to the Dominions beyond the seas, where his was almost the only British name which excited a sympathetic echo in the ears of people who are apt to think that the mother country forgets them. The first-fruits of this confidence were evident, and they found expression in some words from the Prime Minister which were spoken some ten days before Lord Kitchener's death.

"There is no other man in this country or in this Empire who could have summoned into existence in so short a time, with so little friction, with such satisfactory, surprising, and even bewildering results, the enormous armies which now at home and abroad are maintaining the honour of the Empire. I am certain that history will regard it as one of the most remarkable achievements that has ever been accomplished, and for that achievement Lord Kitchener is personally entitled to the credit."

It was because the public saw very little of the man for whom they had so great an admiration that the legend grew up of him as "the silent Sphinx; the emotionless machine; the harsh and heartless commander". His appearances in public

were not numerous, and the larger part of his life was spent away from Great Britain. Before 1896, the year of the success of his advance on Dongola, very few home-staying Britons had set eyes on him. He paid a flying visit to London to see the authorities at the War Office. An invitation had been sent to him, by the Lord Mayor elect, to the Guildhall Banquet of that year, but nobody knew till after the banquet had begun whether he was present or not. A whisper ran round that he had come, and presently he was discovered in a rather modest position at one of the cross tables. The applause which greeted the recognition of the hero of the hour plainly embarrassed him, and the tall man in full-dress uniform, after rising, sat down again with relief. He was not seen in this country again till he came back with the victory of Khartoum to his record, and he was quite unprepared for his welcome. While crossing on the Calais boat to Dover he perceived Dover pier black with people; and he asked an officer on his staff, who was with him, what these people were doing there? He was soon to discover, for Dover was prepared with an official welcome, to which Sir Herbert Kitchener replied in very few words. It was one of the few speeches he ever made in public without reading them, and, brief though it was, its phrasing was admirable. The welcome at Dover was only preliminary to that which London was waiting to give. Victoria Station and its approaches were packed. Lord Wolseley, who came to meet him, could hardly get into the station, and Kitchener could hardly be got out. London and the whole of Britain were anxious only to give expression to the admiration they felt; and their enthusiasm for him never declined from this altitude during the years that followed, despite the comparatively few occasions they had for showing it. That great soldier, Lord Roberts, suffered some decline of his popularity in the years before the war, but Lord Kitchener never. When in the November of 1914 he again attended a Guildhall Banquet, there to make

the speech in which he said he should want more men and still more, he was greeted, as he entered the Guildhall library, with a shout of applause, fierce in its fervour, such as few guests can ever have heard in that place.

To one who had not seen him since the day of his return from Khartoum, it seemed that the years had not altered him very much. In the year of Khartoum, as in that of the Dongola expedition, he had worn full-dress uniform; in the year of the beginning of the Great War he was the one soldier at the Guildhall Banquet who came in khaki. But men did not often observe Kitchener's uniform; it was his face and build which fixed one's eyes. He was very tall, and did not look less so on account of his heavy, high shoulders. Those who knew him as a young man speak of him as "tall, slim, vigorous, dark-haired"; "a thin-faced, slightly stooping figure"; and the descriptions scarcely tally with later impressions. He never became bulky or heavy, and he moved with lightness, and gave an idea of great activity as well as strength. The "stooping figure" of the earlier description was a confused impression, no doubt, of the heavy shoulders; but the thin face we find hard to reconcile with later impressions of him. Lord Kitchener's face was broad, whatever Lieutenant Kitchener's may have been; and his features were heavier than his photographs make him appear, and were burnt red by Eastern suns. The face was older in Khartoum days than any of his portraits; for Lord Kitchener, despite his growth of thick hair and his upright figure, looked his age. Even the eyes, on whose steely qualities so many have dwelt, were not young or brilliant—too much sand had blown in them for that; and there was a slight—a very slight—divergence between them. But they looked very straight at any person Lord Kitchener wanted to see; and nobody would ever have believed of them that they could be stared down. They added their impression to the rest of the bold-featured, strong-

jawed face that this was a man who was determined to have his own way, and had generally had it. We may add to this portrait a few words of description once penned by Mr. T. P. O'Connor, which lose nothing by not being conventionally adulatory:—

"The large, strong mouth, heavily covered with the typical military and brush-like moustache; the square, strong jaw; the heavy brows; the glittering eyes, and even the brick-red complexion—the complexion that told so many tales of hard rides for many hundreds of miles under blazing Egyptian suns, through wild and trackless Egyptian sands; all the features of a strong, fierce, dominant nature were really brought out into greater relief by that occasional smile. . . . Through it all the face seemed strangely familiar to me. . . . In the end it all at once struck me why—it was the typical face of the Irish Resident Magistrate!"

The touch of dry humour in the last phrase is not unfair to Lord Kitchener. Nobody could look at him for a moment and believe that he was a man to trifle with; and even those photographs of him which so smooth out the weather-beaten character of his face leave that impression. One of the last portraits of him was drawn in crayon by a newspaper artist only a few weeks before his death. Lord Kitchener liked it, and declared it to be a better likeness of him than any recent ones. Finding him in this cordial temper, the artist asked him if he would write his signature below the picture. After a momentary hesitation he agreed—a great concession, for his autographs are few. The artist began laboriously to remove with a palette-knife the glass which covered the crayon drawing to protect it. But the process was too slow for Kitchener. He came to the artist's aid, and in his haste broke the glass. Not in the least dashed, he shook the fragments off, wrote his signature, "Kitchener, F.M.", and handed back the finished product to the artist without a word. There was something very characteristic of the man in the incident.

LORD KITCHENER

One of his latest portraits, taken during the Great War

From a photograph by Elliott and Fry

He could be both impatient and violent; when driving power was necessary, none could be more peremptory than he; yet, when the occasion demanded it, he displayed a power of sitting tight which was not only disconcerting but exasperating to his opponents, whether in war or peace. He preferred to work alone, and to concentrate power in his own hands. In the crisis with which the nation was faced the people would gladly have given him the position of Dictator. It was a position which a Cabinet imbued with the tradition of civilian authority and responsibility was less willing to concede, and the fact has not been concealed that during the long months of a war in which there were many mistakes—as there were bound to be, having regard to the nation's unpreparedness and the super-preparedness of the enemy—he had to struggle for his authority and powers. He was quite aware that he had made mistakes, and he was unfairly made responsible for that which arose out of the shortage of high-explosive shells in 1915. Lord Desborough told a story of him, that a high staff officer, afterwards a commanding general, came to see him from the front, and was searchingly asked by him about munitions. Kitchener listened, and then he said: "I hope the army does not think I have let them down", and tears rolled from those eyes which had been burnt out by desert suns. That story might seem unduly sentimental as applied to him, but it is the truth that he felt the criticisms directed against him very keenly; not that he cared for criticism or opposition, but because the army was dearer to him than his own reputation. To Lord Derby, who was one day in Lord Kitchener's room at the War Office, he said: "I wish you could tell me what I am doing wrong." When Lord Derby expressed his surprise, Kitchener added: "I feel there is something I ought to be doing. There is something more I ought to do for the country. I am doing all I can: and yet I feel I am leaving much undone." It is some consolation to reflect that in these hours

the nation always stood by him, and, as Colonel Repington wrote in the *Times*, if the public had been asked by a referendum to choose between Kitchener and the Cabinet, it was certainly not the Cabinet which would have won the day. He fully appreciated the support which he had from the country during this great and grave time. "I have made a lot of mistakes", he said to someone in the spring of 1916, and added that "the country still seems to give me a great deal of confidence." "Confidence" was the just word. To some great commanders soldiers give their devotion, to others their respect. What Kitchener inspired in every man under his command was confidence.

To this incomplete and preliminary sketch of Lord Kitchener one must add the testimony of the friends who spoke of him not as a commander but as they knew him apart from his work. Lord Desborough said of him that no one of his friends was a more stimulating companion. "When alone with you he was very talkative, and his curious humour and his quaint summing up of individuals and situations was an unfailing source of interest and surprise. . . . Children accepted him as a natural friend."

"People who only knew him a little were quite unaware of his true nature," wrote an anonymous friend, "for he showed himself in intimacy to very few. Latterly he made no new friends, the people he liked to be with were the men and women he had known well for twenty years; and the three or four houses he stayed in during his holidays were always the same, and the company was the same too. For these intimate friends he had a very strong affection. Years did not win him to forget, sadness did not drive him to more cheerful worlds; once fond of anyone 'K' was always fond of them, never forgot them, and always in a shy sort of way wanted to show he was fond of them. . . . He was very reserved about the deeper things of life, though he was talkative enough on all others. In daily intercourse he had a sense of humour, a hatred of 'tosh', and a simplicity of nature which made him fine company, and in the great world he always seemed the most impor-

tant person present, the natural centre of gravity around which others turned." (*Times*, June 9, 1916.)

Another friend, Sir Frederick Milner, wrote that "those who really knew him would have gone through fire and water for him"; and that though "he was reserved, and was by nature shy, behind all there beat a heart as warm and generous as ever man possessed". That, as may be seen, was not a solitary tribute. One friend, his secretary, Colonel Fitz-Gerald, died with him, and those who knew them both said that FitzGerald would not have wished to survive his chief. "Never was there a stronger or more loyal affection than that which these two men had for one another. They rest together, a loss to all who knew and loved them, enshrined together in the hearts of their countrymen." To that epitaph one other sentence only need be added, from his friend, Lord Derby: "We in these islands from time immemorial have paid a heavy toll to the sea for our insular security, but speaking as the friend of a friend I can say that the sea never exacted a heavier toll than when Lord Kitchener, coffined in a British man-of-war, passed to the great beyond".

§ 2

A great physician once said that no man could ever tell, till the end of his life was come, what was the most important hour in it. To those who can now survey Lord Kitchener's life as a whole, it will seem that all its events led up to that supreme hour when he stepped forward to lead a nation in arms. For that all his knowledge, all his tutored ability to order and to command, had been gained, all the victories which stamped him with authority had been won. Among the earliest reminiscences of him is the time when he seized the opportunity to enlist as a volunteer in the French army during the Franco-Prussian War of 1870; and forty-six years later Field-

Marshal Joffre's generous message of condolence recalled that the man "who with patriotic ardour created and organized the noble and valiant British army now fighting by our side" had himself fought in the French ranks as a volunteer. From that time forward each incident in his career, as this record will show, is a step which leads to the next one; and Kitchener himself, though so cool and resolute, so certain of the course he meant to take, and the objects at which he aimed, was led by a destiny greater than his own consciousness towards the summit he reached.

Of his earlier career only the industriously-laid foundations are perceptible. He entered the Royal Military Academy in 1868, and obtained a commission in the Royal Engineers three years later, in 1871. It was in a memorable interval in the course of these military studies that his adventurous entry into the French army was made. After his commission had been obtained he settled down to the solid work of his profession at Chatham and Aldershot. But because his profession was to him a career, he was quick to seize the first opportunity that offered of enlarging the scope of his duties. In the long peace which Britain enjoyed after the Crimea, the only way of advancement for an ambitious soldier was by way of special service. Lieutenant Kitchener took the first appointment offered to him, that of doing survey work in the Near East. The work was done under the auspices of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and the object of it was topographical and archæological. To Lieutenant Kitchener it promised the opportunity of getting out of the ruck, of acquiring practical acquaintance with the engineer's work of surveying and map-making on a considerable scale, and of gaining an intimacy with the East such as could be obtained in no other way. It was a momentous decision to which fate seemed to have led him, for the whole of his life was directed by the bypath which he chose. He spent four years here, with intervals of

work at home, and his surveying was done thoroughly and well. But he was learning a good deal more than appeared in his reports. He learned Turkish and Arabic, and he learned a good deal about the native mind; and to his natural love of adventure he added the capacity of dealing with it when it led him into awkward situations. The more immediate outcome of his excellent work was that it attracted the notice of his superiors, and young Lieutenant Kitchener, without any influence to push him, became marked as a man to be given a task requiring ability, when it offered. The opportunity came with the occupation of Cyprus, and he seized with eagerness the opportunity to make for Great Britain a complete and detailed survey of the newly acquired island. There he met, as his chief, Sir Garnet Wolseley—another link in the chain.

It is typical of what is best in the service to which Kitchener belonged, that when it does confer responsibility it sometimes does so with an unsparing hand. This young lieutenant of twenty-eight was told to undertake the business of setting up a regular system of land courts to replace the chaotic ownership which had been the result of Turkish maladministration. He succeeded in evolving a workable system. He was working hard at Eastern dialects all this time, and his survey of Cyprus was interrupted by an undertaking which gave him a larger share of responsibility than any he had yet had. The Russo-Turkish War had filled Anatolia, that Asiatic province of Turkey, from which the chief part of her supplies (and of her armies) is derived, with crowds of destitute fugitives. Sir Charles Wilson was appointed British Consul-General, and asked for Lieutenant Kitchener to help him in the organization of relief set up by the British Government. This was yet another invaluable experience, for not merely did it afford experience in organization but it brought the "relieving officer" into contact with every kind of Mohammedan.

He returned to the humdrum work of the Cyprus survey,

but he could not remain unmoved by the stirrings of disturbance which, not many sea-miles away, were beginning in Egypt. Arabi Pasha had raised the standard of revolt there while the peaceful survey of Cyprus was being conducted by a young officer who was tingling with the desire to be in the midst of alarms. Lieutenant Kitchener was on furlough in Alexandria just when, from a young officer's point of view, the fun was about to begin; and he assumed an extension of his leave in order that he might have a share in it. When Sir Garnet Wolseley arrived with a land force, to complete the campaign against Arabi Pasha which the bombardment of Alexandria had begun, Lieutenant Kitchener secured an appointment as a major of Egyptian cavalry, and thus went through his first Egyptian campaign. It was a swift little campaign, ending in less than a month in the rout of Arabi at Tel-el-Kebir; and it did not offer much chance of distinction to a major of Egyptian cavalry. But it was the first decisive step which Great Britain had taken along that long road of the reorganization of Egypt which so many fine soldiers and administrators have trod; and it was the second decisive step in the career of the greatest soldier among them. Lieutenant Kitchener, R.E., had come to Egypt to make his mark.

He made it in the absence of any backing, but he had one advantage which was inestimable at that time: he knew Arabic—and he knew it well; and he knew the fellaheen almost as well. Lord Dufferin had pointed out that Egypt could not be left to work out its own salvation unless it had an army to protect it from collapsing before the first Bedouin invader; and so a British general, Sir Evelyn Wood, was appointed the first Sirdar of an Egyptian army—an army which had to be made. It was to have regular battalions and a cavalry arm; and twenty-five British officers were to build it up. Captain Kitchener was appointed second in command to

Lieutenant-Colonel Taylor of the cavalry. When, many years later, Field-Marshal Lord Kitchener told officers to make British battalions out of men who had never handled any weapon more lethal than a shovel or a pen, he may have reflected that he had once attempted and accomplished a far harder task on the banks of the Nile. He had to make men out of serfs before he made Egyptians into soldiers. But the Egyptian recruit learned that if Kitchener wanted him to become an efficient soldier, the best way to avoid trouble was to make an effort to attain the Kitchener standard.

Progress was not very fast in Egypt, and it had one damaging interruption. Captain Kitchener was away in South Palestine on a new surveying expedition when he learnt by Arab messengers, who had been sent after him, that disaster had overcome the army of Hicks Pasha, which, with incredible folly, the Egyptian Government had dispatched to subjugate the Soudan. When Kitchener reached Cairo a new situation had arisen in Egypt. The Soudan was in the hands of the Mahdi; the Egyptian forces, such as they were, could not move out of their garrison; the British forces were neither masters in their own house nor in that of which they had assumed the tenure. The Mahdi, inaugurating and consolidating his pretensions by wiping out the forces of Hicks Pasha, was the ruler of the Soudan, a perpetual menace to Egypt and the Nile. It was the removal of that menace to which sixteen years of Kitchener's life were given.

It was long indeed before much of value could be driven into the Egyptian soldiery, and if one examines the dusty record of unseen, hardly recognized, effort which British officers were doing in the Soudan in those days, it is to find that it proceeded without any coherent plan and without much reward or evident success. There was one failure which was none of the making of the new Egyptian army, but which stamped itself on the British imagination more heavily than

any other except Majuba Hill—it was the abandonment of Gordon and his death at Khartoum at the hands of the same hardy fighters who had wiped out poor Colonel Hicks. At that time Kitchener was in the Intelligence Department, an office in which there were very little thanks and very great risks. Many stories were told of Kitchener's sudden appearances and disappearances, his aptitude at disguising himself as an Arab, an aptitude to which his ability as a speaker of native dialects contributed. But the legends are hardly necessary. Certain it is that he volunteered for one difficult and dangerous duty after another. Certain, also, it is that his work in the Soudan captured him, so that it was to him an aim, an end in itself, implying more to him than anything else.

It is likely that he discerned the end as he meant to make it, and believed it to be in his power to fashion destiny even when the destiny was that of the British Empire. But for many years he may have felt himself in the clutches of something almost as strong, namely, the policy of British Governments. The respective responsibilities of General Gordon and of the Foreign Office for the desperate position in which Gordon found himself at Khartoum may be a matter of controversy, but there is little to be said for the policy which endeavoured to hold Egypt by a series of military expedients and expeditionary makeshifts which were costly in life, costly in prestige, and always compromising to the British status in the country which they protected. It needs no divination to imagine the feelings with which the British officers making the Egyptian army viewed their futile advances and successive withdrawals. It is conceivable that to one among them, who was not given to lamenting failure, they may have served as a spur to the determination to alter the policy in order to redeem the failures. There was never any man who was more capable of measuring means with ends, or who was less likely to attempt impossible tasks. Major Kitchener had received too many

hard knocks, and had seen others receive them, to cherish illusions about Egypt. He had seen Colonel J. D. Stewart's dash to relieve Gordon end in massacre; he had seen the failure of the larger relief expedition of General Sir Herbert Stewart. The failure meant a good deal to Kitchener. He had preserved touch with General Gordon through his Intelligence messengers; he probably believed, as others did, in Gordon's star and influence; and the blow of the murder of Gordon may have seemed to him the end of all on which he had built. At any rate he was in the best position to know how serious was the task of rebuilding.

He resigned his commission in the Egyptian army, and spent some time in Zanzibar as a Boundary Commissioner. But if he had thought himself at that time the master of his own career, fate—and Egypt—were too strong for him; for in 1886 he was back again, now Governor of Suakin, and once more plunged into the fierce routine of struggling with inadequate means against the strong enemy at the Egyptian gates. His end of the log was kept up with his usual thoroughness and energy. He fortified Suakin and made it proof against Dervish raids; with a very full knowledge of the indispensable qualities of baksheesh, he subsidized the right tribes, and saw that he got value for his money—even to the extent of inducing "friendlies" to co-operate against Osman Digna, an adherent of the Mahdi. In a long decade of the little fights that made the Egyptian army he was always fully employed. Osman Digna, whom he harried from Suakin, left a keepsake for him that was the most expensive gift which that elusive leader ever had to pay for. Kitchener had captured Osman Digna's camp at Handoub, but the friendlies pressed on too far, and Kitchener's reserves had to be thrown in too soon. In the counter-attack Major Kitchener received a bullet which went through his jaw into his neck; and that was the nearest approach to what soldiers call a "decision" that was reached

that day. It is not, perhaps, fanciful to suppose that Kitchener, who never after that gave battle in the Soudan without making certain of an annihilating victory, always kept in mind his experience of the haphazard rough and tumble with Osman Digna at Handoub.

There were many victories and half-victories in the succeeding years, and there is a line of division between them. There were the hard-fought fights of the second Teb and Tamai; Wolseley's expedition up the Nile, with Abu Klea and Kerbekan; the second Suakin campaign, in which Kitchener's brigade of black Soudanese helped the then Sirdar, Sir Francis Grenfell, to give Osman Digna the second lesson—gallant, futile affairs many of them, and leading nowhere. Then came the period in which, in the nine years between 1887 and 1896, the long days of re-organization, of retrenchment, of difficulties and discouragements, of unconquerable, undisappointed work began to tell—and the Dervishes began to beat against a protected Egypt and to go to pieces. The battle of Toski was the sign and symbol of the new order of affairs. In this battle Wad-en-Nejumi—the great emir who had destroyed the forces of Hicks Pasha—strove to invade Egypt; and here Grenfell tested the new Egyptian army in its first ordered battle. Kitchener commanded the Egyptian cavalry, which he had done so much to make. One does not think of him as a dashing cavalry leader, but he rounded off that fateful day by the cavalry charge of the Egyptian Horse and the 20th Hussars. All sorts of experiences go to the making of a leader. Kitchener tasted them all; but in one respect the cavalry charge at Toski closed one epoch of his career and opened another. That was not his *métier* in life; he was not to win back the Soudan by leading horsemen, but by conquering it in another fashion—by Kitchener's way, the way of the locomotive and the light railway, the boiler-houses and the store-rooms.

In the long years he had learnt that to conquer the

Dervishes the desert must itself be conquered. It could be conquered only by a railway. Others had projected desert railways: Kitchener made one. In 1890 he succeeded Sir Francis Grenfell as Sirdar, and two years later he began the reconquest of the Soudan. Without a single throw-back the work went forward—often very slowly, but always onward. Kitchener was never in a hurry, which is one reason why the world will not forget him in a hurry. With immovable self-control he consolidated every yard of ground won before taking the next step. The Soudan's real power lay in its desert waste and barrenness. Kitchener's machine, by making transport possible, defeated it. The bayonet action waited always till the railway action had piled the camp with supplies and munitions of war. Patient and swift, certain and relentless, the Soudan machine rolled southward. The man who controlled it was often in those days compared to a machine. He worked like one; he asked others to work like one. He would have no married officers, and the sick were sent home; he would have everyone give what he gave—his life to the end in view. "As far as Egypt is concerned", wrote one who observed him on the eve of his final triumph, "he is the man of destiny—the man who has been preparing himself sixteen years for one great purpose. For Anglo-Egypt he is the Mahdi, the expected; the man who has sifted experience and corrected error; who has worked at small things and waited for great; marble to sit still, and fire to smite; steadfast, cold, and inflexible; the man who has made himself a machine to retake Khartoum!"

He took it. The task was done. At Omdurman the dervish rule was ended, the Khalifa put to flight, his army destroyed rather than routed, for there were over 9000 killed, 16,000 wounded, and 5000 prisoners. The Dervish army was killed out as hardly an army has been killed out in the history of war. And the cost to Kitchener's army was

194 British, 463 native—total 653. It was an incredibly cheap victory; but it was not to be reckoned in this way. It was a victory which had given back to Britain her honour. The symbol of it was the funeral service that was held for Gordon in his Residency garden, with the men who had fought for Gordon's life while he lived standing under the flag. The minute-guns boomed after the twenty-one guns' salute to the flag; the chaplains read the psalms. Father Brindle, who died within a few weeks of Lord Kitchener, read a memorial prayer bareheaded in the sun; the band played "Abide with me". There were some who said that the tears stood in Kitchener's eyes as his brigadiers stepped out according to their rank and shook his hand. What wonder? He had trodden the road to Khartoum for fourteen years, and stood at the goal at last.

Yet not the goal of his life, but the beginning of new tasks. Hardly had the guns ceased, the wounded been gathered together, than a mission of the most delicate kind was imposed upon the conqueror. A French exploring-party under Major Marchand, afterwards to serve in the Great World War as General Marchand, had reached Fashoda on the Blue Nile, and the situation thus created gave to French diplomacy the opportunity to claim territorial rights in the region thus reached. There is reason to believe that Lord Salisbury never supposed that Marchand's expedition would reach the Nile and raise these awkward questions; and the moment could not have been worse for disposing of them. But Lord Cromer, the British Agent-General in Egypt, was at the moment in London, and, when consulted by Lord Salisbury, averred the most complete confidence in Kitchener's ability.

"I urged", he wrote after Lord Kitchener's death, "that he was fully aware of all the general facts of the case and of the necessity of acting with great caution and moderation. I therefore advised that no

detailed instructions of any kind should be sent to him, and that reliance should be placed on his discretion. . . . It is now a matter of history that Lord Kitchener amply justified the confidence which was placed in him. The whole of this unfortunate and most regrettable incident has now, to the great advantage of both the British and the French nations, passed into oblivion, but it ought to be remembered that we owe it largely to Lord Kitchener's tact and judgment that a solution was found of a question which had it been injudiciously handled might have led to very serious consequences."

To the public which does not deal in diplomacy, and has a distrust of it as profound as its ignorance, Kitchener's diplomacy was overshadowed by his military achievement. They proposed for him, as they always propose for victorious soldiers, that he should come to reform the War Office, a task for which perhaps he was equipped better than most men, but which has broken most soldiers who have attempted it. But long before that crucial test could be applied to him, immediate tasks arose. The war in South Africa, with its black week and its triple disaster of Stormberg, Magersfontein, and Colenso, shook British belief in Aldershot and the home generals. A cry went up for Lord Roberts and for Lord Kitchener, which was almost as poignant as that which arose in a later day for the younger of them. The history of that campaign and of Kitchener's share in it, a most difficult share, and not a very thankful one, is also part of the development of Kitchener. It was his organization which made Lord Roberts's strategy possible and successful; it was his unlimited patience and method which brought the long-drawn guerrilla warfare to an end; it was, again, his statesmanship and large views which made possible a fruitful peace with a brave and resourceful adversary.

There are two other developments in his subsequent career of which the briefest mention need here be made, his work in India and his tour in Australasia. Both were part of his

equipment for handling the Great War, to the emergency of which his whole ability, his energy, experience, and knowledge were finally called. In India the history of his seven years' administration of the army is the history of effort to overcome the defects of its armament, equipment, and its organic and administrative defects. In Australia his recommendations for a Federal Defence Force led to the adoption of a scheme which might be advantageously adopted by the Empire as a whole. It was adopted by the Commonwealth Government. For New Zealand Lord Kitchener drew up a similar scheme, which was also adopted. On his way home he returned by way of the North American continent, and, visiting Canada, conferred with its military authorities. The result of his advice was seen in the constitution of Canada's forces into complete divisional units. Thus, when the great moment came, the great call of 1914, Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and India were ready, each in its own way, to answer the call which Lord Kitchener addressed to them.

In the trying hours of Britain's history there is often a cry for a dictator, for the strong man who will take the reins of affairs into his own hands and ride down opposition. There never was a nation less amenable to a dictator, or one in which his action was quicker to awaken the bitter opposition of vested interests. While Kitchener was under Lord Cromer, the strong man in Egypt, receiving at every step and at all times Lord Cromer's unwavering support, his actions received almost unalloyed approval from his countrymen, because the only unsound institutions he upset were not theirs. When, however, he left the conduct of military operations in a sphere where he was the proved master, to undertake the winding up of a difficult campaign in South Africa, where the conditions were unprecedented, where the materials with which he had to work were not fitted for the task, and where, besides being his own Chief of Staff he had to forge a new weapon,

criticism soon lifted its head. Lord Kitchener found himself no longer a commander who was a law to himself, but one who was tied to the War Office, and who had to handle commanding officers who had years of Aldershot or Pall Mall behind them. He had also to walk warily of that side of English opinion which, beginning by describing itself boldly as pro-Boer, never ceased at any stage of the campaign to repudiate strong measures against the enemy, and at one point denounced them as "methods of barbarism". That was Lord Kitchener's first experience of doing the unpleasant work of an unmilitary nation, and one cannot doubt that it was a useful lesson to him. It strengthened that imperturbability which was a necessity to the man who, in a democratic country, has to do what he thinks best, whether it is popular or not. The accusations against him of undue severity to the Boers were ludicrous. Lord Kitchener, although a stern fighter, always remembered that war was only a means to an end, the end in view being a settlement, in some way, of the causes of strife. Therefore, although unrelaxing in his efforts to subdue the resistance of the Boers, he was equally incessant in his efforts to induce them to come to terms. In the course of the last negotiations, which brought peace at last, Kitchener's influence was exerted strongly to induce the Government to offer lenient terms to the gallant adversaries who had won his respect and admiration. His practical mind saw clearly that the demand for the unconditional surrender of the Boers was due to the desire to salve the wounded vanity of the British nation, and, being himself singularly free from vanity, he could not understand why concessions which were certain to be given in case of surrender could not be offered beforehand as terms for an honourable settlement. It was a strong man's view.

In the seven years quickly following on the South African War, which Lord Kitchener spent in India as Commander-in-

Chief—from 1902 to 1909—he came into contact or conflict with interests, prejudices, and an order of things more solidly established than that which he had encountered in Egypt or South Africa. The criticisms of his administration have not yet died down; they appeared in at least one obituary notice by a contemporary officer. This detraction is applied chiefly to the strong view which Lord Kitchener took and enforced with regard to the position of the Commander-in-Chief in India. Under the old system the Commander-in-Chief had no place in the Viceroy's council of India. His views were transmitted to the military member of council, who in his turn put them before the council. Lord Kitchener's view was that, as he, the Commander-in-Chief, was responsible for the efficiency of the army in India, he ought to have the opportunity of explaining his own plans to his supreme authority, the Indian Government, instead of being compelled to submit them at second-hand through the lips of another. In short, he believed that the military head should have a seat on the Board of Directors. The innovation was fought by the Viceroy, and was resisted by the other members of the council. Eventually Kitchener got his own way, and became War Minister of India, even as he afterwards became War Minister in the British Government.

It is not contended that the arrangement was, or is, ideal. In a Cabinet framed as is that of Great Britain, or as the Council of India is, there are several drawbacks to it, and the chief of them lies outside it. The drawback was that in the Indian army there were many faults of organization which it demanded all a great soldier administrator's time and energy to repair. It cannot be said that Lord Kitchener's reforms produced all that was expected of them or that he himself desired; and when his own strong hand was withdrawn, others who lacked his driving power and persistence found the machine he had constructed beyond their control. The

machine and its constructor have, therefore, been adversely criticized, and not least by those who opposed the reconstruction at the time; but we believe that the future will show Lord Kitchener's scheme to have been the only one on which the army of India could ever have been raised to the level of a modern national army commensurate with India's power and needs. When Lord Kitchener arrived in India, the troops, British and native, were organized and administered in an antiquated and unpractical system. The distribution of the Indian army had been changed little since the Mutiny; regiments were distributed without relation to any possible emergency; the cantonments were chosen rather for convenience than for their suitability either to manœuvres or to mobilization. Commands in peace had not necessarily any relation to commands in war —a state of things which had been evilly conspicuous in the British army before the South African War, and had exacted the appropriate penalty in the earlier disasters. Only a small proportion of the total force of the Indian army was regarded as immediately available for war—the comparison with the British army need not be pressed. Nor was there any proper system of training staff officers. Military conditions such as these were opposed to all Kitchener's ideas of efficiency and preparation for war. Isolated reforms could be of little use, for all the details of the organization of an army are interlocked and overlapping; it was apparent that an entirely new organization must be evolved. Lord Kitchener created a new army out of the old materials.

When he went to India the available field force of the army consisted of four divisions drawn from different commands and by no means completely equipped for war. Five years later, in the year 1907, Lord Kitchener had completed his reorganization by creating a Northern and a Southern Army, one of five, the other of four, divisions ready for war. Their divisions and brigades were permanently organized and

staffed, and were commanded in peace by the generals who would lead them in war. This co-ordination and coalescence of command from general to subaltern is the first condition of the efficiency of a striking force; the responsibility of commanding officers for the training of the young officers, on which Kitchener insisted, is the guarantee that men shall be able to depend on one another in the hour of war. As he made colonels responsible for subalterns, so he made commanding generals responsible for the commanding officers of regiments. "Troops", he said, "must be accustomed to regard their generals not as hostile critics, always on the look-out for something to find fault with, but as their trusted leaders in war, their instructors in peace, and at all times their ready helpers, able and willing to promote their welfare and to spare no effort to increase their preparedness for the stress of active service."

There was another characteristic dictum in this historic Army Order, which was that "to be regarded as leaders, generals must be competent to lead; to be accepted as instructors, their professional knowledge must be undoubted, and this entails on them the obligation of increasing study and of constant practical application. In this way alone can they properly prepare their troops for war, and at the same time so train themselves as to be able adequately to discharge the great responsibilities which will devolve upon them when called upon to command in the field." In brief, the Indian army was to be a professional army, new style. It was to have, and did have, a Staff College at Quetta and a remodelled Staff system. Kitchener was aware that all these reforms would be useless unless they reached to the bottom as well as to the top. He greatly benefited the material position of the sepoy; the pay of all ranks was much improved; a higher pension scale was established; clothing and kit regulations were altered in the interest of the soldier. He considerably widened the areas from

which the native units were recruited. Here he was much helped by the loyalty of the great feudatory princes of India, some of whom once complained to him, so he told an acquaintance, that the chief defect of the British rule in India was that by making peace so secure it had diminished the opportunities of the recreation of war. Besides the Gurkhas and the Sikhs, other warlike tribes, such as the Rajpoots of Jodhpur and the Jats of Bikanir, were largely drawn upon. Inefficient battalions were disbanded and replaced by others drawn from these more promising sources of recruiting.

The need for much that he did in India was obvious. It was left for him to get it done. His term of office came to an end in 1909, and it was his ambition to consummate the work he had begun by becoming Viceroy of India. He made no secret of his disappointment when this post was given to another, for he had entertained the belief, not without reason, that it would be offered to him. The appointment of Lord Hardinge was warranted by political reasons; but Lord Kitchener understood the East, and our position in India would have been bettered had his ambition been gratified. It was reserved for him to serve the Empire in another fashion than he had wished. It must seem to all now that destiny chose for him the better way. The first service he rendered to Greater Britain was that of visiting the Dominions—Australia, New Zealand, and Canada—in succession and in implanting there the germs of the idea of preparedness for war. His reports of the visits to Australia and New Zealand are State papers of the greatest value. Kitchener the statesman showed his thorough grasp of Imperial problems and strategic principles. Kitchener the practical soldier sketched a military organization suited to the requirements and possibilities of a patriotic and democratic community. "The first and imperative principle of the enrolment and maintenance of an efficient citizen force", he wrote, "is that the nation as a whole

should take pride in its defenders, insist upon the organization's being designed for war purposes only, and provide the means for properly educating, training, and equipping their officers and men. Unless these requirements be met, no military system can be devised which will be other than an illusion and a source of waste of public funds."

How admirable the teaching; how exact in its application to the needs of a national army for Great Britain as well as for these offshoots of Greater Britain! It is apparent now that an even greater opportunity was missed in not entrusting to Lord Kitchener the reform of the War Office, and all that reform implies, than in the failure to make him Viceroy of India.

Yet to those who have studied the political history of Great Britain, and the history of Army Reform since the Franco-Prussian War, it will be even more apparent that no real reform of the British army could ever have come without some such great awakening to the need for it which the shock of the Great War of 1914 gave to the nation. When that moment came, there was one man whose whole life, experience, and convictions fitted him to attempt the superhuman task of attempting that which had been delayed so long, and at such stupendous risk—the task of giving to his country the citizen army that was indispensable to her needs. The effort taxed even his enormous energy and power of will; and, it need not be said, strained to the utmost the willingness of men, whose position and authority in the huge military hierarchy was independent of Lord Kitchener, to co-operate with him. He was the new broom, and the War Office had no love for new brooms: it is no mean tribute to its tenacity and forcefulness that broom after broom has been worn out or broken in the handle in the effort to sweep there. Lord Kitchener was not to be worn out; but his work was not made easy for him, and from the first he determined to do it in his own way. He did not depend wholly on the expansibility of the Territorial

organization, and for that he has been blamed, because the new army which he set about raising on an independent basis was regarded as competing with and overlapping the Territorials. But Lord Kitchener realized what no one else did—that there was no existing machinery which could possibly cope with the ultimate demands which the military situation would make on the manhood of the nation. To have attempted to expand the Territorial organization into a Continental army would have been akin to making a howitzer with a set of jeweller's tools. "More men, and still more men", the phrase which he afterwards used, was always in his mind. The "New Armies"—"Kitchener's Armies", as they were unofficially called—stirred the public imagination, and kept it from being lulled into a security which our island position mistakenly imparts. Lord Kitchener had no illusions. "Three years, or the period of the war", that pregnant phrase showed what was in his mind, and he accustomed the country to think in millions. In doing so he showed once again how his quick and prescient mind could understand the mind of others. He knew his country for a country of compromise; he knew, also, that it could be led by stages to go anywhere and do anything, like the armies it sends out, and he adhered as long as was possible to the voluntary system. His famous letter, in which he asked for another half-million men, is well known. He wrote out the draft himself, and at the fourth time of writing he said: "If I have to write this out again—I shall have conscription". The remark was made jokingly; but behind the jest lay hidden the knowledge of the truth that, at the bidding of the man who knew what was needed, there was no sacrifice which the nation would hesitate to make.

E. S. G.

CHAPTER II

Lord Kitchener's Homes and Upbringing

Kitchener's Ancestry—Homes in Suffolk—His Father's Estates in Ireland—Like Father, like Son—Kitchener's Home in Kent and his Estates in East Africa—His Island on the Nile—Other Homes and Haunts—Careers of his Three Brothers—His Sister and other Relations—Boyhood of Kitchener—His Early Life Abroad—Training at Woolwich—Volunteer in the Franco-Prussian War—Its Object-lessons for Kitchener—Army Troubles of the Period—Commission in the Royal Engineers.

IT is related of the great Duke of Wellington that, on being asked whether he was an Irishman, he replied by enquiring if a man who was born in a stable would be called a horse. Lord Roberts was an Irishman, though he first saw the light in Cawnpore. Lord Kitchener was no Irishman, though he was born and spent the first thirteen years of his life in County Kerry. This part of Ireland has another interesting link with the World War. It was on the coast of Kerry that the emissaries of Germany, led by the ex-British Consular officer Casement, effected their inglorious landing in a collapsible boat from a submarine on Good Friday morning in 1916. The Sinn Feiners, upon whom they counted to overthrow British rule in Ireland and to distract our attention from the German armies in France, were a power in County Kerry. Next to Dublin, it was, perhaps, the principal centre in which the traitorous propaganda had won adherents. Even so, remembering the love of creating dramatic coincidence which the Germans exhibited repeatedly in waging their war, it is not impossible that the childish

vanity which is part of their mentality found satisfaction in contemplating a certain appositeness about the chosen jumping-off place for the revolution. At any rate, the greatest military Power in the world was quite capable of remembering that the man whose genius had made Great Britain, for the first time, a great military Power, and won the honour of bitter hatred in the enemy country, had early association with the district of Tralee.

The stock from which Lord Kitchener sprang was East Anglian on both sides for many generations. The Kitcheners migrated there from Hampshire, where Lord Kitchener's ancestors were closely connected with the parish of Binsted, Alton. His earliest known progenitors were churchwardens of the Church of the Holy Cross, the parish church of Binsted, and lived at Wheatley. Thomas Kitchener, born in 1666, was agent to Sir Nicholas Stuart of Hartley Maudit, Bart., and at the age of twenty-seven left Binsted and went to live at Lakenheath, near Ely, in Suffolk, where Sir Nicholas was lord of the manor. Thomas was churchwarden in 1697. Parochial registers of the parish of Lakenheath and age-worn gravestones of the churchyard tell the story of the family. One inscription runs thus:—

"Here lyeth the body of Thomas Kitchener, who came from Binsted, Alton, Hampshire, A.D. 1693, as agent to the Honble. Sir Nicholas Stuart, Bart., dep. this life April the 5th, 1731. Aged 65 years."

From this Thomas Kitchener the tree of genealogy grows. By his wife, Abigail, he had three sons. The youngest of these, Robert Kitchener, settled lands upon charitable uses in 1756 for the education of the poor boys of Lakenheath. His son Thomas, who married Martha Robinson, daughter of William Robinson of Eriswell Hall, near Lakenheath, had three sons. The eldest was William Kitchener, who was born

at Lakenheath in 1768, and died on June 1, 1807—Lord Kitchener's grandfather. His sister Elizabeth became the wife of Habakkuk Robinson, tanner, of Bagshot, Surrey, brother of Henry Crabb Robinson, the diarist and friend of Wordsworth.

With William Kitchener the orbit of the family immediately extends. He became a London merchant, and after attaining the dignity of admission to the freedom of the Clothworkers' Company, married, in 1792, the daughter of the Rev. Thomas Waldegrave, of Bury St. Edmunds. By her he had two sons, the elder of whom, named Robinson John, was Master of the Clothworkers' Company in 1864–5. William Kitchener's wife died, and he married, as his second wife, in 1799, Emma, daughter of the Rev. Thomas Cripps, the rector of Cheadle, in Cheshire. Three sons of this marriage grew to manhood. One, William Cripps Kitchener, born in 1803, practised as a solicitor at Newmarket, Suffolk, was widely known and respected, and lived to enter his seventieth year; another was Henry Horatio Kitchener, the father of Lord Kitchener.

Henry Horatio was the first of his line to adopt the profession of arms. He was born on the day which was to make the most celebrated son of East Anglia famous for ever in the annals of British history for the victory of Trafalgar (21st October, 1805). At the age of twenty-five he entered the army as a cornet in the 13th (then Light) Dragoons. Promoted lieutenant in 1834, and captain in 1841, he exchanged into the 29th Foot, became major in 1846, and in the following year attained the rank of lieutenant-colonel. Meanwhile he had married, in 1845, Miss Frances Chevallier. It is of interest, in view of what their greatest son's future was to be, that Lord Kitchener's parents both visited India before he was born, his father serving there during the latter part of his career in the army, from which he retired in 1849.

By tracing Lord Kitchener's maternal ancestry we arrive

LIEUTENANT-COLONEL KITCHENER

Father of Lord Kitchener

From a portrait in a family album

at another of what may be called his homes—the moated and delightful Aspall Hall, in the heart of Suffolk. Although, owing to a dispute between Colonel Kitchener and his mother-in-law, Herbert was twenty-six before he first visited Aspall, he became very fond of the place. He commemorated this by making Aspall part of his title when he was raised to the peerage. His mother's people, the Chevalliers, were a Jersey family. Kitchener's maternal ancestry is more interesting than his paternal. There is not a single Kitchener in the Dictionary of National Biography at the present date, but there are several Chevalliers, the first being Anthony Rodolph, Hebraist and French Protestant (1523–72). He was born in Normandy, and descended from a noble family. He settled at Cambridge for some years, and, returning there later, after an absence during which he visited Calvin at Geneva, received the appointment of Hebrew professor in Cambridge University in 1569. Hebrew lectures at St. Paul's Cathedral also appear to have been among Chevallier's activities. He was prebendary of Canterbury in 1569–70, and a year or so later received two years' leave of absence. His life was menaced in the St. Bartholomew massacre in Paris, but he escaped to Guernsey, where he died. Next we have the record of John Chevalier, chronicler of Jersey, about the period of the Civil War, who was a *vingtenier*, or tything-man, of the town of St. Heliers. But the family which became united with the Kitcheners by the marriage at Aspall Church on 24th April, 1845, spells with a double "l"—Chevallier, pronounced with accent on the last syllable. In the seventeenth century Clement Chevallier married Susanna Temple, a descendant of John Temple of Stowe, the ancestor of the Duke of Buckingham. A son of this union, Temple Chevallier, born in Jersey in 1675, was the first-of his name to settle in Suffolk, where he purchased the Aspall Hall estate, near Debenham, in 1702. Prior to this date Aspall Hall had

been, from the time of Henry V, the seat of the noble family of Brooks, Lords Cobham. Temple Chevallier lived to enjoy Aspall for twenty years, and was succeeded by his great-nephew, Clement Benjamin Chevallier, who died in 1762. Next in succession came his son Temple, of Magdalen College, Cambridge, perpetual curate of Aspall, who married Mary Fiske, member of an old Suffolk family. His eldest son was Temple Fiske Chevallier, rector of Badingham, in Suffolk—he died in 1816. His son, Temple Chevallier (1794–1873), noted as an astronomer, became a canon of Durham, was an able classical scholar, mathematician, and lecturer, and a pioneer in the introduction of scientific studies into education; in 1837 he framed regulations for a class of students in civil engineering and mining in the University of Durham. Temple Fiske's youngest brother, with whom we are here concerned, was John Chevallier, born in 1774. After qualifying as physician, John took Orders, and in 1817 presented himself to the living of Aspall, which was in his own gift. For many years he received deranged patients into Aspall Hall. He concerned himself also in agriculture, and has the credit of being the first to cultivate and introduce to practical agriculture the celebrated Chevallier barley. All this is extremely interesting in view of certain aspects of Lord Kitchener's career. John Chevallier, who was Lord Kitchener's grandfather, died on 14th August, 1846. He was married thrice. By his third wife, an East Anglian named Elizabeth Cole, of Bury, Dr. John had several children. The fifth of these, Miss Frances, or Fanny, Chevallier, was to be Lord Kitchener's mother.

We have already noted that Lord Kitchener included his mother's home in the title he chose. In the grounds of Aspall Hall there grows to-day a deodar-tree which she brought home and planted as a sapling on returning from India with her soldier husband. During a visit to Ipswich to

receive the freedom, in 1902, before his departure for India, Lord Kitchener stayed with his cousin, Mr. J. B. Chevallier, at Aspall Hall, and one of the ceremonies which he attended was a Morris-tube competition at Aspall, in which the competitors were teams of three from Eye, Debenham, Framlingham, and elsewhere.

To Mr. J. B. Chevallier the writer is indebted for the following interesting note on Colonel Kitchener and Lord Kitchener:—

"I remember my father saying that Colonel Kitchener took his wife to India just at the time of the Sikh War [1845–6], and he arrived to join his regiment just after some severe engagement—Aliwal or Sobraon —where his regiment was much cut up: but he wrote home that he must consider himself fortunate in being late, 'as a live dog is better than a dead lion'.

"Lord Kitchener's heir—Viscount Broome—was, as a boy, at school with the son of the Maharajah Duleep Singh, at whose deposition old Colonel Kitchener was present about 1849 at Lahore. I remember old Colonel Kitchener telling me how curious it was that the grandson of a then junior officer, and the son of the Prince whom he had seen deposed, should be friends together in England—an instance of the wide embrace of the British Empire.

"An incident in Lord Kitchener's life that he once told me, about 1878 when at Aspall, is as follows. He was attending a senior officer who was representing the British Army at some German manœuvres. The senior officer fell ill, so that the junior officer had to take his place, and on one occasion Herbert K. travelled in the same carriage as the Emperor William I, who talked to him. He first enquired in what language he would like to talk, and H. K. chose French. Then the Emperor asked him if there was anything he wished to enquire about. H. K. said he was puzzled to understand how they could cross a certain river—I forget the name—which was very swift. Next day the Emperor arranged that a detachment should cross the river on pontoons for Kitchener's edification. Herbert told me that he was probably a bigger man on that day than he ever would be again."

Lord Kitchener's first home, as we have seen, was in

County Kerry. The state of Ireland then furnishes a clue to his father's reason for settling there in 1849. In the troubled history of Ireland, 1847 is marked not only by the death of Daniel O'Connell while on his way to Rome, but also as a year of great famine, which brought in its train considerable ruin among landowners. The Encumbered Estates Act was thereupon passed, in order to enable owners of land or leases subject to encumbrance to apply to Commissioners appointed under it to direct the sale of such property. Colonel Kitchener, being then on a holiday in Ireland, saw his opportunity to make an advantageous purchase in Kerry. He was a friend of Mr. Pierce Mahony, of Kilmorna, who lent him Gunsborough Villa, a square, unpretentious, white-fronted homestead about three miles from Listowel, on the road to Ballylongford. In that house, on 24th June, 1850, Lord Kitchener was born. He was baptized on the following 22nd September, at Ahavallin church, by the Rev. Robert Sandes, rector of the parish of Ballylongford. About this date Colonel Kitchener bought an outlying portion of the Knight of Glin's estate, which he afterwards sold, and from Mr. Samuel Julian he purchased Crotta, near Kilflynn, about seven miles from Tralee. The town of Ballylongford is situated about four miles west-south-west of Tarbert, near the estuary of the Shannon, immediately south of which is Tralee Bay. A mile or so from the head of the bay is Tralee, capital of the county, and seaport. Crotta House was a great improvement upon Gunsborough. Larger, more picturesque, and with a fine garden, it had distinction also as having once belonged to the Ponsonbys, a family of large landowners and of great political power in Ireland.

From the occupations which centred around Crotta, Lord Kitchener may well have received his first bent towards agriculture. Like father, like son. In after life Lord Kitchener (who revisited Tralee and the scenes of his boyhood in 1912)

LORD KITCHENER'S BIRTHPLACE: GUNSBOROUGH HOUSE,
NEAR LISTOWEL, COUNTY KERRY

LORD KITCHENER'S EARLY HOME: CROTTA HOUSE, KILFLYNN

was to become a tremendous creator: one who loved to see things grow, and, as it were, to make two blades of grass grow where one grew before. His father in those early days not only reclaimed the ground he had acquired, but established a brickwork and pottery. In the country-side the retired soldier quickly won a reputation as an authority upon questions of crops and stock. He applied himself diligently to the improvement of breeds. With an eye to business, also, he anticipated a custom which had considerable vogue in England many years later, by taking in a couple of young gentlemen pupils to learn the farming. So when, in due course, Colonel Kitchener wished to leave those pursuits and Ireland, he was in a position to realize a handsome profit on the original cost.

Perhaps it was due to the experiences of those earliest years in the beautiful south-west of Ireland, to which we shall return later, that Lord Kitchener was always happiest in the country. When he could spare the time from London, during the Great War, he paid fleeting visits to Broome Park, in Kent, the old place whose beauties he was restoring, and to which he had become deeply attached. Very characteristic of the soldier in him was the step he took here on the very day war broke out. Workmen had been busily employed, and rails laid down in the grounds for the purpose of conveying earth for the terraces he was making. Suddenly all that activity was arrested. Trucks that stood half-filled then continued standing throughout the remainder of Lord Kitchener's life. Had any onlooker been able to enter the house itself he would have found only the hall and the drawing-room furnished. Some of Lord Kitchener's china was there. All the other rooms were gutted, the process of restoration being stopped by the war. We can understand how he would have loved to see his designs for his home growing to completion under his eyes. But there had been no delay or hesitation about his course. "I won't employ a man who should be serving," he said on the day the

war began. Such work as was afterwards carried out was done by men who were ineligible for the army.

Just as he had planned and schemed for his homes over-sea, so he had lavished his personal hopes and love of organization upon this fine old seventeenth-century hall in the heart of Broome Park. Far removed from the turmoil of London and the popular haunts of holiday-makers, it brought at least the atmosphere of peace in the days of Armageddon to the overworked War Minister on such occasions as he could pay a flying visit from town, sometimes staying over the week-end, motoring down on the Saturday and returning on the following evening. He took the greatest pride in the old hall and its surroundings, and the work of restoration, the replanning of the grounds in the formal style of the seventeenth century, and the gathering of such household gods as Chinese porcelain and antique furniture, were almost the sole distractions of his crowded life. The hall had long been deserted, and in sad need of repair when Lord Kitchener bought it from the Oxenden family in 1911, but the work of restoration, begun at once, was in every respect worthy of the new owner's motto, "Thorough", which he had carved in stone over his mantelpiece in the handsome oak-panelled hall. This hall was raised in order to take in the rooms on the story above, thus making it correspond with the famous Oxenden drawing-room. A charming host, and rare friend to those privileged to enjoy his confidence in private life, he meant every word of the hospitable inscription over the massive oak doors which he had provided at the main entrance to the mansion—"*Mea domus tua*". The whole of the south front had been restored with the old bricks removed from "My Lord's" wall, as it was called, forming part of the estate at one time owned by Lord Cowper on the road between Sandwich and Canterbury. Always a great lover of flowers, Lord Kitchener had given them a large place in his plans for

Broome Park. It has been said that, had he lived to enjoy sufficient leisure, he might have become as famous for his geraniums as was Joseph Chamberlain for his orchids. Only a few days before taking his last journey he entertained in his grounds a party of wounded soldiers from Folkestone, and made a point of inviting the men to pick bunches of flowers to take back with them.

Lord Kitchener, as already mentioned, became the owner of Broome in 1911. The Oxendens, from whom he bought the estate, with its 550 acres—some of the most beautiful in all the Garden of England—had been resident in Kent since the days of Henry VII. One of them, in the seventeenth century, became Governor of the fort and island of Bombay. The hall was built, about 1620, by Basil Dixwell, who belonged to a collateral branch of the Oxenden family, and was knighted by Charles I. Thence it passed to his nephew, Mark Dixwell, whose son was created a baronet by the Merry Monarch. It was Mark Dixwell's son, Sir Basil, who, dying at Broome in 1750, left this, among the rest of his estates, to his kinsman, George Oxenden, second son of Sir George Oxenden, Bart., of Dean, with the proviso that he took the name and arms of Dixwell as well. Shortly afterwards, however, young George Oxenden died, and the manor and seat of Broome fell to his father, the handsome Sir George, who is remembered to-day more for his profligacies than any services he rendered either as Lord of the Admiralty and of the Treasury or as Member of Parliament for Sandwich. Horace Walpole, Lord Harvey, Lady Mary Montagu, all bear witness to his lurid reputation.

The whole parish of Barham, in which Broome Park is situated, is rich in legendary and historical associations. Barham Downs was the scene of Cæsar's decisive battle with the Britons little less than nineteen hundred years before Lord Kitchener was born. It is no wide stretch of imagination to

suppose that as the conqueror of the Soudan paced these downs on which Cæsar's disciplined Romans hurled back the heroic but hopeless onslaught of the uncivilized Britons, his mind would revert to his own one-sided triumph over the Mahdist host at Omdurman. The scene of the last stand of the ancient Britons is still pointed out as "Old England's Hole".

The same downs are also known as the "Tappington Moor" of that grim legend, the "Hand of Glory", in the *Ingoldsby Legends* of Richard Barham, himself a native of the district. Broome Park stands in the very centre of the Ingoldsby country, and the hall itself has been identified as the real original of Tappington Hall,[1] the home of the "bad Sir Giles" in "The Spectre of Tappington"—not the picturesque old manor-house of that name, where the guilty bloodstains of Great Eliza's day may still, we are told, be seen on the oaken stairs. When Lord Kitchener bought Broome Park the hall still contained its old "powdering closet", into which my lady of bygone days, when head-dresses were the crowning glory of the fashionable world, would thrust her head through a hatch in the wall to prevent the otherwise inevitable scattering of powder all over her room.

What first attracted Lord Kitchener to the Ingoldsby country is not clear. He had friends at Dover and Folkestone — not many miles distant on the coast—and Sturry Court, where his old colleague, Lord Milner, lived was only a short distance away by car, on the other side of Canterbury. The charm of the place was doubtless the impressive, old-world dignity of its hall, the grace of its typical English landscape, and the spirit of peace which seemed to pervade the whole country-side. Before the overwhelming tragedy of his death was more than a few days old, we ventured to follow Lord Kitchener's footsteps through the grounds of his beloved

[1] *The Ingoldsby Country*. C. G. Harper. 1906.

BROOME PARK, KENT: LORD KITCHENER'S COUNTRY RESIDENCE

Broome. "Silence deep as death" had descended upon hall and park alike. The hall itself, with its unfinished gardens all in disarray, and the little railway surrounding it all lifeless and abandoned, were hushed with a stillness more eloquent than words. But even as we stood and grieved, and wondered at the cruel stroke which had robbed the nation of such a man at such a time, the boom of a distant gun, and the buzzing of a vigilant air-scout overhead, served to remind us that though the great warrior had gone to his rest he had left the whole of the machinery of his mighty armies in running order, and that his skilled engineers were "carrying on".

Another place that would have been his occasional home affords so brilliant a light upon the character of Lord Kitchener, and introduces us to so comparatively little known a side of his character, that we may usefully dwell upon it at some length. We refer to Lord Kitchener's estate in British East Africa. When he was Captain Kitchener he had gone out in 1886, at the instance of the Foreign Office, to investigate the boundaries of the Sultan of Zanzibar's dominions—this at a time when Germany had been actively acquiring concessions along the east coast of Africa. Before he next visited that region a quarter of a century had passed. His quality of leaving an ineffaceable impression wherever he went was shown by the warm welcome his old Arab friends extended to him when they met him again in 1911 after all those years. He was on a private trip, and before it was over he had purchased an estate of some 5000 acres of agricultural and grazing land at Muhoroni, on the Uganda line, about forty miles on the eastern side of Victoria Nyanza. The ground was well chosen. Lying in the north basin near the Nandi hills, it is in the country of the most hard-working of the Kaffir tribes, the Kavirondo, who, from their habits of industry and thrift, have earned the title of "the Scots of East Africa". Lord Kitchener's intention was to make of this a model estate, which

should be to Tropical Africa what Cecil Rhodes's well-known farm in the Matoppo Hills was to be to Rhodesia and South Africa generally.

Kitchener knew Rhodes, and had the greatest admiration for him. We may pause to let the imagination play upon "what might have been" had those two super-Britons been spared to spend the evening of their days in quiet retirement. Imagine the man who thought in continents and the man who fashioned the mightiest British army in history meeting in those circumstances. Conjuring up this scene, we can hear them talking, not about the military triumphs or conquests they had obtained for the Empire, but about their respective farming achievements, operations, ideas. To anyone who knew both, the picture will not seem unduly fanciful. In the conversation the sword would have been turned into the ploughshare. They would have visited each other, those Empire-builders and administrators, and discussed the pedigrees of cattle, the latest improvement of crops, the developments in agriculture all round. They would have debated the influence those developments were having on the population of Rhodesia and East Africa, countries which in the boyhood of many readers of this biography were not yet reclaimed from barbarism. Whatever was to create in those lands better conditions for the black man and healthy homes for the white man would have won keen sympathy from both. For it is another feature of resemblance between them that neither Kitchener nor Rhodes ever forgot that Africa was the home of the black before ever it became the home of the white man. To improve the lot of the black inhabitant was in their scheme of things no less essential than to secure the prosperity of the white immigrant. Hence the great pleasure Kitchener took in the visits of native chiefs to his farm.

His principles in the conduct of this occasional home-that-was-to-be in East Africa afford valuable insight into his real

character, which was that of practical idealist. Lord Kitchener was an economist in the strictest sense of the term. He knew the value of a sovereign as well as any man. His place must pay its way. But this does not mean that it was to be run for the sake of profit. Not at all. It means simply that he was setting up a model estate, and unless it were so run that it paid, its value as a model would be impaired—it would not be a real but an artificial model for the country around. He threw everything open to inspection; and he made no secret to his managers that the estate must be run on thorough business lines in order that nobody who came to see should be misled into copying or following an example which they would repent having followed. His motto of "thorough" was carried into every conception. If he built a new sort of cattle-dip, it was not begun until after the most complete investigation—involving quite extensive correspondence with agriculturists all over the world—had satisfied him absolutely as to the best lines of construction. The amount accomplished from the time of acquiring the estate in 1912 and the outbreak of war in 1914 was perfectly marvellous. Coffee seeds being wanted, he exerted his influence and acquaintance with Mohammedans to give the experiment of coffee-growing on his estate the most advantageous start possible, the seeds being sent down from districts in the interior of Arabia which, on account of the proximity of the Holy Places, are inaccessible to Europeans. It was well known throughout British East Africa that in the case of every experiment the results were freely at the disposal of all the white settlers in the country, while parties of native chiefs, under Government tutelage, were welcome visitors when they arrived to see the most up-to-date forms of agriculture. The war, of course, checked developments, and robbed Lord Kitchener of any time to devote to East Africa. But just before the war he had imported special cattle from Egypt, highly productive milking

strains, with the idea of improving the cattle breeds of East Africa. The Agricultural Department of the Protectorate, moreover, anxious to introduce the best kinds of tobacco, asked to be allowed to carry out some experiments on his land, as they thought it suitable; and those experiments were started, under the supervision of Lord Kitchener's manager. The Field-Marshal always expressed the hope and intention of going out and seeing for himself, from time to time, the practical fulfilling of his ambition to make a great model estate for all possible classes of agriculture.

By inclination he was really a farmer. His love for the country and for engineering things, especially the construction of railways, were part of one and the same character—the character of the cultivator. The impression we derive from studying his estate in British East Africa is confirmed by an incident which belongs to a slightly earlier period. About the year 1903–4, when the Indian expedition was going on across Tibet, some farmers in South Africa read in the papers that the troops in India were reaping fields of wheat at an altitude of 12,000 feet in the Himalayas, on the borders of Tibet. The idea occurred to those Boers that the wheat might be suitable for the high-veldt farms in South Africa, where, owing to altitude, the growing of wheat is difficult. They wrote, therefore, to Lord Kitchener, who was then Commander-in-Chief in India, to enquire about this Tibetan wheat. A few months later two tons of the wheat arrived as a present to the South African farmers from Lord Kitchener. He had had it carried down from the plateau of Tibet. For years afterwards he took the greatest interest in following up the results of its planting in South Africa. It impressed upon him that good farmers must ever be on the alert, and he stored this in his mind as a lesson to convey to others. During an interval spent in England in 1911 we find him visiting the Suffolk Agricultural Show, and specially referring to it as an illustra-

tion. Dutch farmers, generally supposed to be backward, had seen an opportunity for enterprise in this wheat of Tibet. British farmers, with the world to select from, should constantly keep their eyes open for the possibility of overcoming difficulties, getting the best seed, and in every way keeping march with the most modern ideas.

Away on the Nile, behind Elephantine, when he was Sirdar, Lord Kitchener had a bungalow home. The native owners of this island had quarrelled, and its cultivation was being sadly neglected. Kitchener bought it. "He has now a little bit of Egypt of his own", wrote one who called upon him there in 1899. "He hopes some day, when his fighting is done, to retire there to rest upon his laurels." The fact is, that Lord Kitchener had an idea of displaying the most perfect forms of agriculture here. He gave up the island, however, about the time he went to India, as he thought he would never return to Egypt to be able to look after it. But it is rather amusing that wild pigeons helped him to come to this decision. He was greatly bothered by them. "I don't know how I am to get rid of the pigeons," he would say; "they come into everything. I've got every man, with every single gun—and they can't hit them." So he sold the island.

When in London in the early 'nineties the Junior United Service Club was practically his home; though, as it had no sleeping accommodation, he took a bedroom near by. Many officers now serving in the war will remember how he used to interview them in the little private smoking-room at the club in the year 1895, when he was selecting young officers for the purpose of his advance, then about to begin, for the recovery of the Soudan. Returning from Khartoum, he visited at Lord Desborough's beautiful Thames-side residence of Taplow Court. "I come to this place as my home," he confided to his friend and host; "I have no home of my own." It was still the soldier and hard campaigner who some five years ago

came home to England on a visit. He rented a little unfurnished flat in Whitehall Court for a few months. Situated at the top of the building, it was the quaintest sight, for the whole furniture consisted of a camp-bed, a deal table, and a few deal chairs. When he became Secretary of State for War, Lady Wantage lent him her house at 2 Carlton Gardens. Here Lord Kitchener spent over six months during that deeply critical stage of the war, after which the King, in March, 1915, placed York House at his disposal for the period of the war.

It has been convenient to digress in order to give this glimpse of some of the homes that figure in the wonderful story of Lord Kitchener's life. We now return to the consecutive story of his career, and that of his brothers. Their parents had five children — Henry Elliot Chevallier, born in India in 1846; Horatio Herbert, the future Field-Marshal; Arthur Buck,[1] born 1852, who became a mining engineer, and died in 1907; Frederick Walter, born 1858; and Francis Emily Jane, afterwards the wife of Mr. Harry Rainy Parker (who died in 1890) of Rothley Temple, Leicestershire. In 1865, a year after his wife's death, Lord Kitchener's father married Emma Green, and the daughter born of this marriage, at Wakonaiti, New Zealand, in 1867, was named Henrietta Letitia Emma Kawara — the last name being from the river near their house in New Zealand, where Colonel Kitchener owned some property. Three of the Colonel's sons followed the soldier's profession. When the old man died at the age of nearly eighty-nine on 14th August, 1894, at the Manor House, Cossington, Leicester, the position of those sons was: Lieutenant-Colonel H. E. C. Kitchener, D.A.A.G., Jamaica; Brigadier-General Sir Herbert Kitchener, A.D.C. to the Queen, Sirdar of the

[1] Lord Kitchener's great-grandfather was named Buck. The following notice of the death of Lord Kitchener's grandmother appears in *The Gentleman's Magazine*, 1853:—

"June 16, died at Bury, aged 81, Emma, relict of William Kitchener, of Finsbury Place, London, and niece of William Buck, formerly of Bury".

Egyptian Army; and Major F. W. Kitchener, D.A.A.G., at Bombay. Henry Elliott Chevallier Kitchener's steps were these: joined the old 46th Foot in 1866; lieutenant, 1869; captain in the Duke of Cornwall's Light Infantry, 1875; major, 1885; lieutenant-colonel on the Staff, 1893. He served with distinction in Burma, was chief transport officer with the Manipur Field Force, and ultimately became colonel commanding the West Indies Depot at Jamaica. In 1877 he married the only child of Lieutenant-Colonel Franklin Lushington, C.B. (she died in 1897), by whom he had a son, Commander Henry Franklin Chevallier Kitchener, R.N., and a daughter, who married in 1908 Captain Patrick A. F. W. à Beckett, formerly R.A. Notwithstanding his age he took part in the South-West African campaign, and, in 1916, when his brother's death made him Earl Kitchener, he was holding an important command in the East African campaign. Frederick Walter received his commission in the West Yorks regiment in 1876, rose to the rank of brevet-colonel by 1896, was major-general in 1900, and died, in 1912, as Lieutenant-General Sir F. W. Kitchener. He distinguished himself in the Afghan War as transport officer, with the Dongola Expedition of 1896, and in the Soudan Expedition of 1898. In the South African War he commanded the 7th Brigade, and when the campaign was over he took up, in 1903, the command of the 3rd Division the 1st Army Corps in India. On relinquishing this in 1908 he became Governor and Commander-in-Chief of Bermuda. His wife, who predeceased him, was Caroline Fenton, daughter of a colonel in his father's old regiment, the 9th Foot.

No augury of glory attended the early years of Lord Kitchener's life. Through his youth and adolescence there is an almost entire absence of the signs and portents of genius which have been visible in the careers of many of our great men. Yet the setting of his life was invariably romantic, and

environment must have played its part in the moulding of his character from the earliest years. Not being an Irishman by blood, he could hardly be expected to find welling within him, even in Kerry, the full tide of native poetic sentiment:

> "Dear Erin! how sweetly thy green bosom rises,
> An emerald set in the ring of the sea;
> Each blade of thy meadows my faithful heart prizes,
> Thou queen of the west! the world's cush-la-machree."

But it would be no more possible for his English temperament to escape the influence in his formative years of the beautiful Kerry county in which he lived. Kerry is compact of illustrations ancient and modern. Its wild and rocky coast, washed by the turbulent ocean, was famous as the landing-place of the Milesians, and many centuries later its people were terrorized by the privateer Paul Jones. On the sides of the mountains, and among the rocks and caves on the coast, are found the transparent crystals known as "Kerry diamonds", some fine examples of which were seen in the great Irish Exhibition held in Dublin when the future Field-Marshal had just learnt to walk. South and west of the Killarney district are lakes and mountains and romantic glens which rival that district in beauty. It was in a land of foxglove, heath, and bog-myrtle, which could boast the noblest of Irish rivers, and deplore some of the most miserable of Irish peasantry, that the boyhood of Lord Kitchener was spent. Amid such surroundings it can easily be understood that the blue-eyed lad acquired a habit of dreaminess. An only son would have been morbid: he was only shy and reticent. He remained throughout his life a shy and reticent man, one who, while absolutely straight in all his actions, never showed his feelings to anyone whom he did not know extremely well.

The boyhood of the brothers was normal rather than eventful. Colonel Kitchener was a kind-hearted man, but

LORD KITCHENER AS A BABY ON HIS MOTHER'S KNEE

with his elder brother and his sister (now Mrs. E. J. Parker)

A group from a family album

extremely impulsive. In his own youth we find a trait which evidently his greatest son did not inherit, namely, that of playing all manner of audacious tricks—on one occasion, at the Chevalliers', he dressed in female clothes, got hired as a dairy-maid, and had the greatest difficulty in evading the pressing attentions of the grooms at Aspall! While Mrs. Kitchener remained throughout her life a very sweet-natured, quiet, genial, motherly woman, the Colonel grew into a rather peppery old fellow, who took violent likes and dislikes, and was altogether difficult. His boys had a governess, Miss Tucker, and afterwards two or three private tutors in succession, one of whom, Mr. Allen Freeman, was chiefly concerned with Herbert. But Colonel Kitchener was annoyed to find that Herbert took so small an interest in his lessons, and one day, just before an examination, reproved him sharply for his remissness. "If you do not pass," he said, "I will put you to the village school." When the results came out, it was found that Herbert had failed. So he was duly sent to the village school, and his father warned him that if he did not do better there he should be apprenticed to a hatter. From this point, it is said, an improvement set in. The boy gave his mind to study. He made good progress all round, and especially at arithmetic. He was never good at games, but he learnt to swim with his brothers at Bannastrand, a place on the coast—to which the boys used to drive in their father's trap—about seven miles from Crotta House. On Sunday, Herbert attended the Sunday class at Kilflynn Church, where the family worshipped.

Colonel Kitchener believed in his boys acquiring foreign languages. Herbert developed a remarkable gift in this respect. In after life he spoke French very well, and he had an extraordinary faculty for picking up Arab dialects. Thus the early inspiration of his father was highly useful. When Herbert was about thirteen the brothers went to a boarding-

school in Switzerland conducted by an English clergyman named Bennett, at Château au Grand Clos, Rennaz, near Villeneuve, on the eastern shore of Lake Geneva. Louis XVII is said to have stayed at the château at one time. A table has been preserved on which Herbert Kitchener carved his name. It is at Grand Clos that we find first traces of the Kitchener quality of obstinate determination. Each morning when he woke it was Herbert's custom to decide whether he would be good or naughty during the day. If he decided to be naughty, nothing could be done with him! The boys greatly enjoyed their surroundings in the neighbourhood of the Castle of Chillon. In their leisure hours they engaged in bathing, boating, and mountain-climbing. The daughters of the Rev. J. Bennett took the young gentlemen of the boarding-school out riding, and inhabitants of the Aigle district who were boys then recall to-day their feelings of respectful admiration as they watched the cavalcade pass. But the Kitchener boys were also to remember their sojourn in the canton of Vaud on account of their first great sorrow. Their mother, who had suffered much from rheumatism in Ireland, died in October, 1864, at the Swiss village of Clarens, when Herbert was fourteen. Colonel Kitchener did not long remain a widower. He married again in the following year. Meanwhile he had sold his Irish estate, and the family settled in the beautiful and picturesque old town of Dinan, in Brittany, where Lord Kitchener's stepmother still lives to-day. The death of their mother drew father and sons more closely together. Herbert, as he grew into manhood, was always fond of his father. They always got on well together. He was the one who had the same inclinations, leanings, and interests as his father. In after years the father used to go and stay with him on a visit at rooms near Kensington Barracks, London.

First of the boys to leave the family circle and go out into

the world was Henry, who joined the army in 1866. Herbert likewise determined to follow his father's profession. After some further travel on the Continent he came to London to be coached for Woolwich. His crammer was the Rev. George Frost of 28 Kensington Square. When Mr. Frost died, many years later, the pupil of 1867 had acquired fame in the Soudan, and under the old man's pillow was found a letter from Lord Kitchener thanking him for the congratulations he had sent.

In former days any young man who desired to obtain the position of a gentleman cadet had to secure a nomination, in other words, to have his name inserted in the list of the Master-General of the Ordnance as a candidate; after which he was called upon, somewhere between the age of fifteen and seventeen, to pass a competitive examination, which gave him a chance of entering the Royal Military Academy. But already for a decade before young Kitchener's advent in Woolwich the system had been one of open examination, so that any lad was entitled to compete for entrance. Herbert passed the examination on 31st January, 1868, and began his duties at the academy on Woolwich Common twelve days later. This year was distinguished in the history of the academy as the first in which dictionaries were no longer allowed at the examination in German and Hindustani. The Lieutenant-Governor at the time was Major-General J. W. Ormsby, R.A., who died, and was succeeded in March, 1869, by Major-General Sir J. Lintorn Simmons, K.C.B., R.E. There were about 200 cadets.

Early in the last century gentlemen cadets at Woolwich wore knee-breeches, dark-blue coatee, a cocked hat, and a pigtail. By 1840 the knee-breeches disappeared, and the dress then consisted of light-blue trousers and coatee, a forage cap in undress and a shako in full dress. Some time before Kitchener came, the old double-breasted coatee was replaced by a tunic, and a round hat and feather gave way to a busby

with a red bag and horse-hair plume on the left side. The peak of the forage-cap was also altered to a similar pattern to an officer's, and a few years later the cap again underwent a change. In 1870 the dress was slightly altered by the substitution of the ordinary tunic collar for the old leather stock buckling at the back of the neck. One of the cadets of those days has described Kitchener as "rather a dandy who wore spurs". Bullying and drinking were still common at "the Shop"—as the Academy is nicknamed—in his time, and for several years to follow. But we might almost say of Kitchener, as was said of Charles George Gordon (Chinese Gordon), who had preceded him there by twenty years, that he never joined in the ordinary frivolities of the other cadets, and that he "would at times, without apparent reason, withdraw himself from his friends, not speaking for days". Gordon, it was said, was a poor mathematician, Kitchener a proficient one, whose bent lay towards field-telegraphy, the making and working of railways, photography, and surveying. The career of a cadet at Woolwich is comparatively short. Within three years from the period of his being a schoolboy he becomes an officer in one or other of the two scientific corps. Prince Arthur, the third son of Queen Victoria (the Duke of Connaught), joined the Royal Military Academy in 1867 at sixteen years and two months, and passed for a commission in the Royal Engineers on 19th June, 1868, or five months after Kitchener entered. Throughout all his term there Kitchener devoted himself to work. His name does not figure in any of the cricket elevens that met Sandhurst. The first inter-collegiate athletic meeting was held at Beaufort House, Fulham, in 1868, when General Cameron and Colonel Ormsby, the Governors of Sandhurst and Woolwich respectively, presented a shield to be competed for annually by the Royal Military Academy and the Royal Military College. But there is no trace of Kitchener shining in this gallery He did not

LORD KITCHENER AS A CADET AT WOOLWICH ACADEMY

about the age of 17

From a photograph in a family album

become entitled to the distinction of wearing the broad "blue, black, and yellow"—the "Shop" colours, which are supposed to stand for the ingredients of gunpowder: saltpetre, charcoal, and sulphur. Many cadets thought this distinction the highest ambition attainable at the Royal Military Academy, but Kitchener did not share their opinion. He had discovered the value of concentration. And it was no student's prank, but a spirit of earnest adventure, that led him, on the very threshold of his career, to join the French army for a few months.

Though Kitchener's name had become well known in the world by 1900, it is a remarkable fact that his service in France does not seem to have earned the notice of the historian of the Royal Military Academy. Major Guggisberg's book on *The Shop*, published in that year, does indeed mention that the Franco-German war affected the cadet company, but it is another than Kitchener to whom he refers. This was Gentleman-cadet Coffey, who, we are told, packed his bag with a few necessaries in November, 1870, and shook the dust of "the Shop" off his feet without telling even his company officer. Coffey intended to fight for France against Germany. On his journey to Paris he fell in with a couple of French military officers; much conversation and the loan of an artillery "manual" improved his knowledge of French field-guns, and, procuring an interview with the Chief of the Staff, he left the presence of that officer a full-blown *sous-lieutenant.* "He joined the 21st Army Corps, fought in one or two skirmishes, was appointed A.D.C. to the general commanding the artillery of the corps, fought in more battles, and was promoted lieutenant. He was honourably mentioned in dispatches and recommended for further advancement. On the conclusion of the war he returned home; and in view of the special circumstances of the case and the distinction he had gained he was permitted to return to the Academy." The historian adds that Coffey's

reception by his comrades was magnificent, and that the memory of his extraordinary feat will never die in the annals of "the Shop". How strange to find the exploit of the famous engineer officer ignored! But the Coffey affair is useful as showing that the cause of France was engaging the attention of the cadets at large. The instructor in French at the Academy, moreover, M. Valentin, had resigned his appointment and crossed the Channel to fight for his country. So there was more than his residence in France to create in Kitchener the desire to serve. Leaving Woolwich, 16th December, 1870 (by no means a brilliant pass), commissioned in the Royal Engineers, 4th January, he was not due at Chatham till spring. Between Woolwich and Chatham came his service in France.

Kitchener decided to enlist as a private in the Sixth Battalion of the Mobile Guard of the Département of the Côtes-du-Nord. His battalion belonged to the reserves of General Antoine Chanzy's Second Army of the Loire. At Laval, on the Mayenne, Kitchener's technical knowledge of engineering brought him under the notice of his officers. He took part in a somewhat perilous balloon ascent, and while assisting a French officer in this way he caught a chill which developed into pneumonia. He was invalided home, and only the possession of an exceptional constitution enabled him to recover. His experiences in the French army must have made an extraordinary impression on his serious mind. Before hostilities began, the War Minister, Lebœuf, had declared that the French army was in a state of preparation so perfect that not even a single gaiter button would be required for a year to come. Kitchener saw how imperfectly in fact the French army was prepared for war, and how defective were the mobilization arrangements made by the too-confident minister. He saw "how not to do it". We may be sure the young Englishman had his eyes open to the military chaos

around him. Miles upon miles of rolling-stock that might have been utilized to bring up reliefs and supplies stood stationary on the lines. Roads were blocked with baggage. Soldiers were disheartened, and many suffered from frost-bite in the hard trials that lay before them. Chanzy lost all but honour. Though defeat was inevitable, he displayed stubborn valour. On the second of the six days' fight which he put up around Le Mans, in January, 1871, he said to an Englishman who was with him: "It is a question whether the officers of any other country would think it necessary to continue such a struggle. But to a Frenchman there is no alternative so long as there is a chance, however remote, of removing the foot of an invader from the soil of France." Upon Kitchener, who was slow at Woolwich and took longer than most fellows to assimilate knowledge, France must have made one ineffaceable impression—the vital importance of organizing every detail before embarking on a military campaign.

Kitchener's early association with French valour was not forgotten in France. Forty-five years later, in August, 1915, at a review within the French lines during the Great War, Kitchener was presented by Joffre with the black-and-green ribbon granted to the stubborn French defenders.

When the young man came to London after obtaining his memorable insight into bad organization, he was taken before the Duke of Cambridge. Besides being General-Commanding-in-Chief, the Duke had a special interest in gentlemen cadets of Woolwich. As a result of the abolition of the Board of Ordnance, the artillery and engineers were under his authority. The Duke had been made colonel of the two corps in 1861, and in the following year Governor of the Academy. Hence it was no unfriendly eye he cast on the young officer when asking why he joined the French army. "I thought I should not be wanted for a time, sir, and I was anxious to learn something," replied young Kitchener. The answer pleased

the Duke. "I saw", he said afterwards, "that there was real grit in the young fellow." So Kitchener, already a good horseman, went on to Chatham and the mounted troop, Royal Engineers.

It was a period now when the whole scheme of things military in Great Britain was engaging the attention of the Government and the experts. Visionaries who, on the strength of the first great Exhibition in Hyde Park, dreamt during the first year or two of Lord Kitchener's life that an era of peace and goodwill on earth had dawned, were rudely awakened. The people of this country had kept their eyes on the American Civil War and the Austro-Prussian War, while they reflected on the lessons of the breakdown of our own army administration in the Crimea. In 1854 there were no fewer than seven departments connected with army administration. There were a Secretary of State for War and a Secretary at War (the two were merged in 1855). The Home Secretary, with the Secretary at War, controlled the militia; the Treasury had the direct management of the Commissariat Department, and through its commissariat officers provided provisions, fuel, and light for the troops employed abroad and in Ireland.

When our little army perished before Sebastopol we had no troops to replace it. This fact sank deeply into the minds of all thinking soldiers. But the reforms introduced after the Crimea touched the whole question only in a small way. The Secretary of State for War, an office which had been united with that of the Colonies till 1854, took over the powers of the Secretary at War and of the Board of Ordnance. He also took over the militia and yeomanry from the Home Office and the commissariat from the Treasury. He became responsible to Parliament for the whole military administration; but the General-Commanding-in-Chief (the Duke of Cambridge), as representing the Crown, enjoyed some independence in matters

LORD KITCHENER AS A YOUNG OFFICER OF THE ROYAL ENGINEERS

From a photograph in a family album

of discipline and command, appointments and promotion. A few years later the Staff College at Sandhurst was inaugurated. A healthy agitation had begun; and when at length the Franco-German War opened the eyes of the British people to the real state of our out-of-date army, a powerful impetus was given to the movement which aimed at restoring military efficiency.

Young Kitchener in his spare moments at Woolwich must have been following closely in the newspapers the development of those army troubles. Before he had been at the academy a year Gladstone was in power (December, 1868) and had appointed Mr. Edward Cardwell Secretary for War. His Under-Secretary was Lord Northbrook (Thomas George Baring). Mr. Cardwell set up a small committee, under Northbrook, to enquire into the arrangements in force for the conduct of business in the army departments. Out of the reports of this committee came proposals for great reforms. A struggle ensued. The opponents of reform had possession of all the high posts in the army. To differ from them was to be called a Radical and a positive danger to the State. Chief of the opponents of reform was the Duke of Cambridge himself. By 1869 he had been for thirteen years the General Commanding-in-Chief, and though in that time he had repeatedly remonstrated with ministers against reductions, and urged increase of the army, no very serious dispute between him and the Secretary for War had occurred till now. The reforms that he abhorred went on in spite of him. Dual control of the army—in other words, his own separate establishment—was abolished. The *Quarterly Review*, in 1870, waxed indignant over this, which it called "the strangest proposal ever hazarded". "A Parliamentary Officer", it observed with bitter irony, "appointing his own Chief of the Staff, monopolizes the patronage and absorbs all authority over the army; and to the House of Commons, no longer to the Crown, is entrusted the defence of the realm—we beg pardon

— not of the realm but of the commonwealth". Yet Mr. (Viscount) Cardwell afterwards came to be described by Viscount Wolseley as the first Secretary of State who, during peace, ever attempted to prepare for the possibility of our being engaged in any big war. The formation of an army reserve was an essential part of the scheme which was carried. While keeping a small peace establishment, Cardwell aimed at making it capable of expansion at short notice by means of a reserve. The success of the Prussians in the Seven Weeks' War drove home that lesson; while the introduction of breech-loading rifles necessitated a new system of tactics. Associated with Cardwell was Northbrook, who piloted the Regulation of the Forces Bill through the House of Lords, and witnessed the struggle which ended in the abolition of the purchase system. Seniority tempered by selection became the principle of promotion. Other reforms were the adoption of short service, the linking of battalions and their localization. To all innovation the Duke was opposed, and he regarded his removal from Horse Guards to the War Office in Pall Mall as so serious a blow to the rights of the Crown and to his own dignity that Queen Victoria intervened on his behalf. But he had to accept the great scheme of 1871–2, just as he had the welding of the linked battalions into territorial regiments by Mr. Childers ten years later.

It was in this military environment, and while Parliament was still in the thick of the fight for army reform, that Herbert Kitchener successfully graduated from the Royal Military Academy. On 4th January, 1871, with sixteen other cadets, he was commissioned in the Royal Engineers G. T.

CHAPTER III

Palestine Exploration

Lieutenant Kitchener's Appointment to the Survey of Palestine—Work of the Palestine Exploration Fund — Kitchener's Archæological Work — His Rescue of Lieutenant Conder from Drowning—The Attack on Lieutenant Conder and Lieutenant Kitchener at Safed — Lieutenant Kitchener's Second Visit to Palestine, as Director of the Survey—The Last Fight of the Crusaders—Caves of Irbid—Survey of the Shores of the Sea of Galilee—Kitchener's Description of his Dealings with the Natives and of their Customs—Jews, Christians, and Bedouins—End and Summary of the Survey—Cyprus, Anatolia, and Egypt—A Journey to Palestine from Egypt for the Palestine Exploration Fund in 1883—The Sinai Peninsula—The Tomb of Aaron—Kitchener's Return to Egypt by the Desert.

IN a paper which Lieutenant H. H. Kitchener, R.E., F.R.G.S., read before the Geographical Section of the British Association, in 1878, he described the work which he had shared in making as a map of Palestine on the model of the United Kingdom Ordnance Survey. This work had been undertaken at the instance of the Palestine Exploration Fund, which projected a map from Dan to Beersheba on the 1-inch scale. It was begun when the Fund sent out Major Stewart, R.E., and a party of non-commissioned officers at the end of 1871. Major Stewart was invalided home after a very short period of service, during which he had, however, established a base line on the plain near Ramleh. This base line was over four miles long, and was calculated with considerable accuracy. Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake had charge of the party till the arrival of Lieutenant Claude Conder in 1872. The work then proceeded regularly, the triangulation

being carried southwards to the hill country, and then north as far as the plain of Esdraelon, on which another base line was measured. Unhappily, Mr. Tyrwhitt Drake, whose work had been of the greatest assistance to the Survey, was seized with fever and died in June, 1874. Lieutenant Conder felt the need of another assistant, preferably a Royal Engineer, and recommended Lieutenant Kitchener to the Committee in September, 1874. In November Lieutenant Kitchener, seizing the opportunity presented to him, at once joined the party in Palestine, and did a year's work in Philistia. During this time his name appears regularly in Lieutenant Conder's reports, and his growing interest in the archæological and historical aspect of the work becomes manifest. It was a characteristic of Kitchener, which first became manifest in the work he undertook in Palestine, to make himself a master of any subject in which his energies were involved. Nothing was too minute for him; if he was inspecting commissariat he must know the cost of every item and the quality and usefulness of every detail; and when, later in life, he collected china, his avidity for information and for exact knowledge of glazes and periods was greater than his desire to add fine pieces to his collection. So it was in Palestine, where, at the end of his period of work, he had become an expert and a controversialist. Had not greater work called Kitchener, had there been no such things as wars and empires, he would have developed into an Oriental scholar.

At first he was clearly interested in the surveying experience—rather arduous work as he afterwards observes:

"During our triangulation we found some little difficulty from the natives who thought we were magicians with power to find hidden treasure underground, and that our cairns were marks to remember the places by. It was an unfortunate idea, as the result was that in the night-time our cairns often disappeared, and the natives groped through any earth to the rock below, hoping to forestall us. After making the

offenders rebuild the cairns on one or two occasions these annoyances disappeared."

On the completion of the triangulation the levelling had to be taken up from the last point on the line. It was most fatiguing work dragging the levelling-staves and heavy instruments over the rough country, and when the descent below the sea-level, in a steep, narrow gorge, was attained it was extremely trying; however, in seven days' work 16¼ miles were accomplished and the seashore was reached, giving a depression of 682 feet 6 inches below the Mediterranean. The survey of the detail had then to be done, and Kitchener describes the careful way in which this was accomplished—the ascertainment of heights of all places by aneroid, besides the calculated heights of all triangulation parts; the checking of the aneroids by a standard barometer; the nomenclature by an Arab scribe; and the checking of the scribe by the guide and by the people in the neighbourhood. "Dishonest guides were dismissed, and as these were peculiarly susceptible of sarcasm, the offenders were not happy when they were laughed out of camp for not knowing their own country as well as we knew it." One can perceive in the last commentary the acquisition of that comprehension of the native, and the ability to handle him, which was afterwards to prove of such value in directing Lieutenant Kitchener's own career. The interest in archæology which has been noted finds its first concrete expression in his identification of the Cave or Caves of Adullam. In Lieutenant Conder's report for the 20th March, 1875, appears the following note:—

"Lieutenant Kitchener took two very successful photographs of Adullam—a cave which, though called 'Aid-el-Mieh' by the native Arabs, and identified by them with some traditional 'Feast of the Hundred', appears to be the authentic Cave of Adullam which sheltered the outlaws of King David's day. It was so identified at any rate by M. Clermont Ganneau."

Kitchener says that the caves were not vast places. Nobody would ever willingly inhabit a vast and draughty cavern, he observes practically, because such places are dark and damp. The Caves of Adullam form a series of convenient habitations, small enough to be warmed by a fire and to give light to their dwellers. Lieutenant Kitchener adhered resolutely to his identification and was supported by M. Clermont Ganneau, a French archæologist of great discernment and ability, who had been lent by the Exploration Fund of the French Foreign Office. M. Clermont Ganneau left some impressions of his new colleague that are not at all like those which were circulated in later years. He speaks of Lieutenant Kitchener's frankness and outspokenness, his high spirits and cheeriness—and (though this excites no surprise) his ardour for work. "Gradually he began to take an interest in archæological discoveries, and acquired in these matters a marked proficiency." He was extremely popular with his colleagues, and between himself and Conder a close friendship was cemented by the perils they shared together. On one occasion, when the two were bathing in the Mediterranean, off Ascalon, Lieutenant Conder was carried away by the current. His friend, a much stronger swimmer, went immediately to his help, and succeeded, not without difficulty, in bringing him back to safety. It was not the only occasion when Lieutenant Conder and Lieutenant Kitchener stood in danger of ending their careers in Palestine.

After a year's work in Philistia, the party, under Lieutenant Conder, began the survey of Galilee, when it was interrupted by an incident which had a marked influence on Lieutenant Kitchener's career. When near Safed they were attacked by some natives. The following letters, written by Lieutenant Kitchener and by Lieutenant Conder, and appearing in the *Reports of the Palestine Exploration Fund*, explain what happened.

Lieutenant Kitchener writes from Mount Carmel on 15th July, 1875:

"Being placed in command of the expedition owing to the temporary illness of Lieutenant Conder I write by his wish to inform the Committee that the survey is at present entirely suspended in consequence of two causes—the first being a murderous and unprovoked attack on the party by Moslem inhabitants of Safed; the second the gradual spread of cholera over the north of Palestine. Lieutenant Conder and myself consider under these circumstances that we cannot take the responsibility of again conducting the party into the field till a very severe punishment has been awarded to the inhabitants of Safed and until the steady advance of the cholera has been checked. . . .

"Lieutenant Conder is at present in bed, recovering from an attack of fever, brought on by the severe nature of the wounds on the head he received in the fight at Safed, and I myself am still suffering from the bruises I received during the engagement."

Lieutenant Conder wrote a formal complaint to the Consul-General at Beyrout:

"On Saturday, the 10th of July, we arrived about 4 p.m. at Safed from El Ba'ineh and erected our tents on a piece of uncultivated ground under clover near Hin el Beida, north of the Moslem quarter. A number of Moslems became spectators of our proceedings. A small English tent was being erected when many of these persons, including one well dressed in a turban and white jibba, came down to it and in a very insolent manner to examine it, laying their fingers on everything and behaving with marked want of courtesy and respect. I am informed that they said they had seen 'many dogs like us before'.

"A ten-chambered revolver, hanging on a tree by the tent was missed at this moment, and its owner, one of my servants, began to enquire if anyone had seen it. I am informed that the leader of the Moslems cursed him in reply. At this moment I came out of my tent where I was resting, and heard my head-servant address this man with civility, using the expression *hadrabuk*, and telling him to go away, as it was not his business. I heard the sheikh reply violently with imprecations, and saw him fling two or perhaps three very large stones at my head-servant. The latter did not reply by violence, but took the

bystanders to witness that an unprovoked assault had been made on him. I advanced as quickly as I could without arms and with nothing in my hands. Before I spoke a single word the sheikh seized me violently by the throat. In defence I struck him on the face with my fist and knocked him down. He got up and again assaulted me, when I struck him right and left, and cut open his lip. When on the ground he drew a knife which measures half a foot length of blade. My head-servant, fortunately, saw him just before he stabbed me, and two of my people took it away from him, and seized him, intending to retain him till the arrival of Government officials. They also bound him, but not by my order.

"The sheikh called out many times: 'Where are my young men?' and some of those who were with him ran to the houses. A crowd collected in an astonishingly short time, and in a few minutes it must have numbered two hundred or more men. I ordered the sheikh to be immediately released, but he refused at first to leave the camp, though he subsequently retired for arms. Meanwhile he encouraged his people to kill all the Christians. They began by a shower of enormous stones upon our party, which numbered only fifteen persons, two of whom were ill at the time.

"Lieutenant Kitchener and myself, supported by our three non-commissioned officers, none having any firearms or other offensive weapons in our hands or about our persons, endeavoured to calm the disturbance, and to separate the crowd from our servants, who, infuriated at the treatment I had received, were anxious in spite of their small numbers to attack the Moslems. The five Europeans were in imminent danger of their lives from the falling stones. While thus engaged Lieutenant Kitchener was seriously injured on the thigh with a huge stone. Corporal Armstrong and Corporal Brophy less severely on the feet. We restrained both parties and entirely prevented our servants from using any offensive weapon, though many of them were struck on the head and body with stones. As soon as a separation had been made I ordered all my party into the tents, to prevent any aggravation of the infuriated mob, who were heaping every species of blasphemous epithets upon our religion and upon the Saviour. The natives of my party were too excited to obey my order. I went out in front and threatened the mob with heavy future punishment, daring them to stone me, but they had lost their senses too much to be intimidated. At this moment there

arrived a number of armed men, apparently the sheikhs of the quarter, who encouraged the crowd. Of these one man had a large scimitar and carbine, another had a battle-axe; two had large clubs, and another a long gun.

"Lieutenant Kitchener and I were immediately surrounded. Three came to me with curses and asked what I was doing. An old man thrust his battle-axe violently into my side, but I did not like to strike him, though I now had a hunting-crop in my hand. I told them that they were mad and would be severely punished if they struck an Englishman. About this time other members of the party saw a gun levelled at me five yards off, but fortunately the man's hand was caught before he fired. A man now came into the crowd which surrounded me, and dealt me a blow on the head with a large club with great violence, causing two wounds on the side of my head, covering my face with blood. A second blow, directed with full force at the top of my head, must inevitably have brained me had I not put my head down to my assailant's chest. My servants gave me up for dead. The blow fell on my neck which ever since then has been so stiff and swollen that it is impossible to turn it round. The rest of the party saw me fall. As soon as I got up I dealt this man a blow on the face with a whip which staggered him, but my whip flew out of my hand and left me entirely unarmed.

"I must inevitably have been murdered but for the cool and prompt assistance of Lieutenant Kitchener, who managed to get to me, and engaged one of the club men, covering my retreat. A blow descending on my head he parried with a cane which was broken by the force of the blow. A second wounded his arm. His escape is unaccountable. Having retired a few paces from the thick of the fray, I saw that the Moslems were gradually surrounding us, stealing behind trees and through vineyards, and I well understood that in such a case, unless the soldiers arrived at once, we must all die. Many of the servants, indeed, had already given up all hope, though none had fled. I gave the order to leave the tents and fly round the hill.

"Lieutenant Kitchener was the last to obey this order, being engaged in front. He returned to his tent, and while running he was fired at and heard the bullet whistle by his head. He was also followed for some distance by a man with a huge scimitar, who subsequently wounded with it more than one of our people.

"Gaining the cover of some trees we stopped on a bare hill-side to consult, and ventured back to the brow to reconnoitre. At this moment the soldiers arrived with an officer, and the English Consular Agent, Herr Marcus Cigal. I am informed that all the offensive weapons were immediately concealed, the stoning and blasphemous language ceased at once, and not an individual of the crowd remained."

Lieutenant Conder then recites the injuries to the party, to himself, Lieutenant Kitchener, Corporals Armstrong and Brophy, and the others; and to his report Lieutenant Kitchener tersely adds that "it was left unfinished when Lieutenant Conder was taken ill. It will, I think, inform the Committee of all the necessary particulars of the conflict."

The vigorous representations of Lieutenant Conder were successful in bringing the offenders to justice. The trial was held at Acre, before a special commission consisting of Colonel Rushdi Bey, chief of the police force in the vilayet of Syria, Mr. Noel Temple Moore, British Consul at Jerusalem, the Cadi, and two members of the local medjliss, or council, one a Christian and the other a Mohammedan. There was a good deal of difficulty at the outset in finding who were the delinquents, lying being not a monopoly of any race. But, by dint of cross-examination, thirteen defendants were unable to show that they had not been concerned in the outrage. Three more were added later. Lieutenant Conder and Lieutenant Kitchener attended the greater part of the tedious sittings at the court in Acre, and after a trial lasting from the 11th to the 28th of September, in which justice marched with leaden foot, the local medjliss appears to have impressed on the tribunal the desirability of letting the offenders down lightly. Of the sixteen men convicted beyond the shadow of a doubt, two were given a year's imprisonment. These were Kahloush and a negro, Massoud, who had been seen carrying weapons—one of them pistols and a club, and the other a gun and a sword—immediately after the fray. Even the local medjliss

did not believe that these implements could have been carried for display. Ali Agha Alan, the sheikh who had begun the whole business, got off with three months, probably because he was a connection of the Emir Abd el Kadr, and five others of his young men were imprisoned with him for the same period. Eight others, Algerines living at Safed, were imprisoned for two months. The moral and intellectual damage to the British party was assessed at £112, 10*s*.

When these recommendations were read out, Lieutenants Conder and Kitchener made strong remonstrances at the inadequacy of the punishments, which were ludicrous in the circumstances, and, in the case of the shorter terms of imprisonment, implied little more than a peaceful holiday, supported by the administrations of admiring friends. Moreover, it was by no means sure that the punishments would be carried out. The tribunal was eventually induced to add both to the imprisonment and — what would hurt more — to the fine, £37, 10*s*. being reckoned as an extra for articles stolen from the tents. The court at Damascus, however, to whom the sentences were referred, took a serious view of the case, largely owing to the determined attitude of Mr. Moore, and, probably to the surprise of the local sheikh, did put him in prison and kept him there.

The party all suffered from fever after the attack on them, if not because of it, and Lieutenant Conder's health was severely shaken. The country was evidently rather disturbed, and, more than that, cholera was spreading. It was decided, therefore, to withdraw the party, and the two leaders and the non-commissioned officers returned to England. Here eighteen months were spent in plotting and re-drawing the map surveys that had been made. It was then proposed that, as Lieutenant Conder's health would not allow him to return to Palestine, Lieutenant Kitchener should be entrusted with the command of a new expedition to finish the survey of Galilee.

The Ordnance Survey appointed three non-commissioned officers of the Royal Engineers to help him, and Kitchener left England in January, 1877. He went, according to his itinerary, from Beyrout to Damascus, and so to Haifa. At Beyrout he interested the new Wali of Syria in the work he was doing, and he saw also the Emir Abd el Kadr, who expressed his deep regret for the outrage at Safed, which had been prompted by his connection, the local sheikh, and who gave Lieutenant Kitchener letters which would secure him and his party against any repetition of such attacks.

Kitchener's letter to the Palestine Exploration Fund recording these occurrences, continues:—

"While at Damascus I heard of the arrival of my non-commissioned officers at Beyrout, having been driven past Haifa by stress of weather. As the Wali did not seem likely to attempt the crossing of the mountains, I went back to Beyrout. After three days, as my party was now complete, I started for Haifa, where I arrived with my non-commissioned officers on Saturday, the 24th of February (1877). . . .

"Owing to the lateness of the rainy season this year, the country is still in a very swampy condition, and even had we not been unavoidably delayed, work could hardly have been begun before. The Kishon had to be crossed in a boat, the horses and mules swimming, and as we had to cross it twice every day it has caused great loss of time. The first day we found considerable difficulty in crossing the Plain of Acca owing to the marshy nature of the ground after the late rains, and could only get to our work by making a long detour after some of us had experienced the pleasures of a mud bath."

The rest of the letter is occupied with a recital of the writer's efforts to identify a place named "Kulmon" or "Kalamon", which appears on several maps, but of which nobody in the neighbourhood ever seems to have heard. "Kalamon" remains an unsolved mystery, and Lieutenant Kitchener dryly observes that it may have been supplied in the maps by some too enthusiastic traveller, "who looked more for what ought to be in the country than what is".

ELISHA'S FOUNTAIN AT JERICHO

This is one of a series of photographs taken by Lieutenant H. H. Kitchener for the Palestine Exploration Fund, and is reproduced by kind permission of the Society. The figure is that of Lieutenant Conder

The progress of the work can be followed by the industriously compiled *Journal of the Survey*, from which the succeeding extracts are made:—

"TIBERIAS, *March 30th*, 1877.

"We are getting on all right with the work, and I hope in another fortnight to have finished the shores of the Sea of Galilee and be on the road to Safed again. . . . The Druses are giving a good deal of trouble, cutting people's throats on the road to Damascus. In the south near Hebron the Arab tribes, Tarabin and Teyyaha, have had a fight. The latter lost 101 men killed, the former only 12. Consul Moore has telegraphed and sent out people to stop all travellers from going that way. It is lucky I am doing the north after all."

But he, at any rate, was light-hearted about any risks that were run, and the following account of his triumphal re-entry into Safed, where the alarming encounter had taken place two years before, has more than a touch of humour in it.

"SAFED, *April 11th*.

"You will be glad to hear that we have made a most successful entry into Safed. The Governor, the Kadi, and Her Britannic Majesty's Consular Agent, with twenty-two followers, came out about an hour and a half on the road to meet me. We rode into the town in quite a triumphal procession. . . . Nothing could be more civil and obliging than everybody was. To-day I have had the Governor, the British Consul, and an old enemy, Ali Agha Alan, the cause of the row; the latter expressed deep sorrow for what he had done, as well he may, as I hear he and the Magrebbins are all but ruined. . . . On Monday I shall move to Meiron, where we shall have rather a long camp, working up to date and carrying the triangulation north."

In the subsequent paragraphs of this instalment of the *Journal*, Lieutenant Kitchener speaks of the imminent declaration of war between Russia and Turkey, and hopes to get his work finished unimpeded by it. By 25th May, when the declaration of war was an accomplished fact, he was at the northern boundary of the work he had set himself, and the total amount surveyed was 530 square miles. In this portion

of the survey, of which he sends a supplementary report, he notes that he has mapped five extinct volcanoes, from which the basalt has been thrown out over the surrounding country; "and the plains, being covered by the ashes and boulders of basalt, are rendered extremely fertile".

But he is clearly touched by the poetry and history of Palestine, apart from its profoundly interesting archæology and geography.

"Immediately above our camp at Hattin", he writes, "was the field of the last great fight of the Crusaders. The Kurn [which he thought was an extinct volcano] rises in rocky ridges above the plain on the south-west, while on the north and east there is a very steep descent to another plain, the Sahel Hattin, which terminates abruptly above the Sea of Galilee. The Kurn Hattin, or 'Horns of Hattin', was the last place held by the king and his brave knights when surrounded by the forces of Saladin. The rocky top seems a natural fortress and well adapted to be defended by superior numbers. The Crusaders were, however, worn out by their long marching and their hard fighting, and after they had driven back the stormers three times the place was carried, the king surrendered with the remnant of his forces, and the Christian kingdom in Palestine ceased to exist."

Lieutenant Kitchener notes, too, that the plateau which extends to the south-east is called the Plain of the Bŭrnus or the Prince, and can be identified therefore with the story of Count Renaud de Chatillon, Lord of Kerak, who was the cause of the war and was always called El Bŭrnus, or Emir of Kerak. The story goes that after the battle the King of Jerusalem, while in Saladin's tent, gave water to El Bŭrnus, but Saladin would not admit that this was an "act of hospitality" which would guarantee the prisoner's life. Afterwards Saladin offered Count Renaud his life if he would change his religion. El Bŭrnus refused, and, as there was nothing more to be said, Saladin did him the honour of slaying him with his own hand. Kitchener relates all this at length with obvious interest in the

old story. Other passages in the *Journal*, which is very detailed, accurate, and "archæological", describe the celebrated caves, east of Irbid, whence Herod the Great dislodged the robbers by attacking them from above. Herod let down his soldiers on platforms, supported by ropes: when there was no more hope of resistance, the outlaws in the caves slew one another. The military possibilities of the position have evidently great interest for the Royal Engineer.

"The first cave entered is a large natural cavern which probably served as a stable for the horses of the garrison; from this a staircase leads up to smaller caves opening from a gallery in the face of the rock; stairs led up from either end of this gallery to similar caves in different tiers. Some are now quite inaccessible from below. The place is inhabited by immense flocks of pigeons, and a great number of vultures and eagles. Water was brought from Irbid by an aqueduct running along the face of the cliff above the castle. . . . This fortress rendered impregnable by nature and art might afford accommodation for six hundred or seven hundred men, and commands the main highway from Damascus to western Palestine."

The next instalment of the journal deals with the survey of the shores of the Sea of Galilee. The Engineer surveyor has not many sentences to spare on negligible descriptions, but the beauty of the land finds expression in his terse sentences. He was a little disappointed with the Sea of Galilee at first—the hills on the eastern side have an almost perfectly level outline, scarcely broken by any valley of importance, and decidedly monotonous in appearance. "Still, the bright sunshine throws a rosy haze over the country, and the contrast with the bright blue water is very beautiful. . . . The best views of the lake are from a distance—from the many heights from which it is visible. As thus seen in the evening it is particularly lovely. Deep blue shadows seem to increase the size of the hills and there is always a rosy flush in the sky and over snow-clad Hermon."

He notes that the road at the eastern end of the Sea of Galilee passes through Kerak, which appears to have been a fortified place of considerable strength. Military possibilities perhaps scarcely seem within the scope of the peaceful surveys of the Palestine Exploration Fund, but Lieutenant Kitchener is always awake to them, and describes carefully the position and the remains of two castles which must have stood on either side of the road. "The place must have been of great importance, as it closes the passage of the valley, and also that of the Jordan at the northern extremity, where it is now crossed by a ferry. It also must have required a large garrison owing to the great size of the plateau." He thinks that this plateau was the camp of the Roman army which Vespasian brought to the attack of Tiberias, as described by Josephus, and that the castle or station was that named by Josephus as Sennabris. Many other places near the Sea of Galilee are described by Lieutenant Kitchener, the chief of them Tiberias, its ruins, and the remains of the sea-wall, with towers along the coast, and next to that Capernaum. He alludes to the curious legend that the fountain of Capernaum was a vein of the Nile, because a Nile fish called "coracinus" is found in the waters, and he has a note on Meiron, the Jewish holy place. "Over the tomb of Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai is a building where the Jews come from all parts of Palestine to hold a sort of revel, lasting two or three days and nights. They dance and pray and light fires over the tomb. It is very extraordinary to see them in their long dressing-gowns and large hats dancing round in a circle."

In a paper read some years later, before the British Association, he gave some further account of their curious festival.

"At Meiron the great pilgrimage of the year came off while we were there. The Jews arrived in thousands, on foot, on donkeys, camels and mules: some came from great distances—some it was said came from England; and yet it was a very bad year owing to the disturbed state

of the country. The Governor arrived to keep order and a guard of soldiers protected the roads. This was no unnecessary precaution, as the first day they brought in an Arab they had shot while rifling some stragglers on the line. In the evening began the ceremonies over the tomb of the Rabbi Simeon Ben Jochai. The whole place was turned into a fair—feasting, dancing and singing went on all night: great torches were lighted over the tomb and lit up the motley crowd: upon these torches the devotees cast embroidered scarves, silks and dresses. The Chief Rabbi sells by auction the right to light up these fires and is said to clear £200 each night. The men kept up an incessant din with rude instruments and singing: they ran round and round in circles hold-each other's hands and occasionally throwing up their arms. Lit up by the blazing torches they had the most grotesque appearance. The contrast between all these intensely excited Jews, some of them apparently intoxicated, and the solemn unmoved serenity of the Turkish Governor and officials, seated on their mats smoking, was very striking. The women occupied the upper chambers of the building and seemed more devout: some of them were engaged in prayer. They have a firm conviction that these pilgrimages ensure their having children."

There are a number of passages scattered in the *Journal* and in the letters, as well as in his address to the British Association, which testify to the way in which the beauty, the interest, the sentiment of the Holy Land had seized on their observer:

"While observing from Mount Tabor I examined three chapels recently unearthed by Roman Catholic monks. They date from Crusading times, when this was supposed to be the Mount of the Transfiguration, and the three chapels are mentioned in old chronicles of the time. The massive fortifications on the top of the mount were probably those erected here in order to resist the Roman armies under Vespasian: they consist of a solid wall built of large drafted stones, flanked at intervals by square towers enclosing a large rectangular space that covered the top of the hill.

"Looking down on the broad plain of Esdraelon stretched out from our feet, it is impossible not to remember that this is the greatest battle-field of the world, from the days of Joshua and the defeat of the mighty

hosts of Sisera, till almost in our own days Napoleon fought the battle of Mount Tabor; and here also is ancient Megiddo, where the last great battle of Armageddon is to be fought."

In the accompanying passages is expressed not only sympathy with the villagers of Palestine, but a sound comprehension of the political situation:—

"On the 3rd of May I moved camp to Dihl, a Christian village. The inhabitants were packing their few portable articles and preparing for flight to Tyre when we arrived. . . . Our greeting was most enthusiastic, as they at once determined not to desert their village and crops and to remain under our protection." [Lieutenant Kitchener had prudently attached four useful Bashi-Bazouks to his party as guards, and, as he observes, was thus quite in a position to repress any small fanatical rising; and the larger part of the population had been conscripted.] "There are a good many Christian villages in this part of the country quite distinct from the Moslems. A Christian village can be known from a distance by the greenness of its vineyards and fields in striking contrast to the barren desolation surrounding most Moslem villages. The terrible fatalism of their religion destroys the country. 'If God wills that fruit trees or vineyards should grow they will grow', says the Moslem, as he sits and smokes.

"These Christians are perfectly distinct from the Levantine mongrel race of Greeks who inhabit the towns on the sea-coast. They are poor, honest, and very religious, though not very intelligent. . . . It was soon spread through the neighbouring villages that we had arrived and a deputation of priests came to me for advice. I recommended them to remain quietly at their villages and to warn their people not to get into any dispute with the Moslems.

"They were very anxious to get arms and to defend themselves, but that course might have led to what they most dreaded. I am glad to say that our influence on the country at this crisis caused these poor Christians to remain in their villages, which if they had deserted would have been seized by the Moslems, and would have undoubtedly led to a grave disturbance. I must also bear testimony to the stringent orders sent from Constantinople to the Turkish governors and officials to protect these Christians, and to put down any attempt to drive them out of the country. There was more cause to fear this, as the ignorance of the

people led them to believe the war was one of religion—Moslem against Christian, instead of Turk against Russian.

"Every evening after sunset a bell was beaten in the village, and all the male population went to the poor chapel, where there was a short service: after this they came and danced and sang in front of our tents sometimes for hours together."

He was quite as much at home in dealing with people of other religions, race, and psychology:

"One evening about eighty Bedouin Arabs with their wives and families arrived. Their chief's son had been ill and they had taken him three days' journey to the tomb of the famous prophet Joshua: this was supposed to have cured him and they were now returning joyful from their pilgrimage. I had a goat killed in their honour, which made us the best friends, and they kept up singing and dancing round fires in front of our tents all night. The men went through the usual war dance, imitating the attack and defeat of an enemy to the accompaniment of clapping hands: but what was more curious was later in the evening when two of the prettiest women were called out by their husbands and went through a peculiar and very graceful dance with swords—they were unveiled and looked very handsome by the firelight. Having rewarded them with lumps of sugar I left them singing songs in our honour. Next morning they were all gone, having left pressing invitations to us to visit them. Two days later the chief came to thank me for the medicine I had given his boy."

The foregoing passages have a specific interest. Kitchener had learnt on the 28th of April, by a telegram sent on to him, that war had been declared between Turkey and Russia. "I hope", he writes in the *Journal*, "this sad news will not interfere with the successful completion of the survey of Galilee." It did not interfere, but in a disturbed country it was largely owing to his tact and ability that it did not. More than that, though he was too modest to say so, his presence had a calming effect on the general situation. This service was fully recognized by the authorities, and Major Wilson, C.B., F.R.S., the President of the Geographical Section of the

British Association, publicly declared that "the tact and energy of Lieutenant Kitchener had greatly tended to the preservation of peace in Palestine during the war". Testimony to this was borne by the Consuls.

Meanwhile, war or no war, the survey went on steadily, as the following passages from the *Journal* and from letters home certify:—

"*June 24th, Nahura.*—All well so far. I hope that before you get this you will have got a telegram: 'North finished: all well: Lebanon', which will mean that I have finished the north and am off to Lebanon for a few weeks' rest.

"*Haifa, July 11th.*—I have finished the north under my original estimate and without Armstrong, and there has been no accident. We are now off for the Lebanon for the three weeks' rest which we sadly want. . . . A report was started in the Beyrout paper that I had been attacked and wounded by Bedouins near Banias. Eldridge sent soldiers and scoured the country. I in the meantime had gone peacefully to Tyre, so there was no end of alarm at my not being heard of." [The report probably arose from a distorted version of the friendly colloquy with the wandering Bedouins.]

They arrived at Mount Lebanon on the 21st of July, after a hot march from Haifa, and found it "charmingly cool". They also found Mr. Eldridge and other Europeans living there for the hot months: "In fact it is quite a return to civilization again". Here he stopped, making plans, duplicates, and writing up the observations and notes. Thence Kitchener, having sent one of his non-commissioned officers, Sergeant Malings, home with the original work, and having repaired Corporal Brophy, who had had a bad fall with a horse ("it was a wonder he was not killed—a loose seat saved him"), went on to Jerusalem, reaching there after a "dreadfully hot journey down the coast". Temperature on one day 114° in the shade. "I got a slight sunstroke on the plain near the seashore. Everybody was much done up. Next day we

LORD KITCHENER (SEATED) AND HIS ELDEST BROTHER

who succeeded him in the Earldom

started in the evening and travelled in the night. We made Tyre, Acre, and then Nazareth. At Nazareth I presented the gun to Abdallah Agah, who wishes to present his thanks to the Committee, and say that he is entirely at their service for anything that may be wanted. The 'gun was very suitable'." The *Journal* continues:—

"On leaving Nazareth I paid a visit to the tents of Feudy-el-Feis, the chief of the Beni Sahr. The sheikh was very civil, and I spent two hours in his tent. He showed me a coat of mail (probably Saracenic) and a Damascus sword he was very proud of. The Government are on very good terms with the Beni Sahr, as Fendy-el-Feis can muster 4500 spears, which renders him an undesirable enemy. The Arabs show no great enthusiasm for their co-religionists at war: they hate the Turk and do not much care in which way the war goes."

Fendy-el-Feis ultimately came into collision with the Turks. In an affray his son was killed by a Turkish bullet. But Fendy remarked philosophically: "My son and I were servants of the Sultan, now he has one less", which, as Kitchener notes, was taken to mean that he did not intend making a feud of it.

The *Journal* is full of interesting passages which invite quotation, for the double reason that they are extremely vivacious, interesting, and observant in themselves, and that they afford one of the few self-revelations which Kitchener ever made in writing. No man, one might say of him, ever did more and wrote less about it. But in these passages he shows the things that interested him, and gives a glimpse of that unconventional and shrewd outlook which his friends declared that he always exhibited in conversation. Here is a passage which describes a visit he paid to the Mukâm Benât Yakûb, "the sacred places of the daughters of Jacob":—

"Many legends were attached to the place. I was shown without difficulty into a little mosque, and then into a large square cave, which had originally been a tomb of some importance. Two rows of recesses

for sarcophagi lined the walls. Here tradition relates that Jacob and his children lived, and that when he was old and blind they brought him Joseph's coat, and the smell of it at once cured him. On regaining the outer mosque I saw a small door with a green curtain hanging over it and incense burning in front: this I was told was the tomb of the seven daughters of Jacob. There they were said to be all as in life, their beauty unimpaired, but it was too sacred to be approached by any but a true believer. I insisted and was then told that these beautiful and holy maids were very quick to take offence, and devoured anyone who came too near their place of rest. However, after a little persuasion I pushed the sheikh aside, and squeezed through the hole, being nearly stifled with the bad incense. After a drop of some feet I found myself on the floor of a cave that opened into another. I explored the caves, one of which had been a tomb: the roof had fallen in: probably in the earthquake of 1838. No recumbent Semitic beauties awaited me. I was very glad to get out into the fresh air again."

Here is a curious intermingling of the consciousness of the ancient history of Palestine and its preservation of odd customs:

"I rode down the great valley that witnessed the flight and pursuit of the Philistines by Joshua on the day that was like no other. I returned by Beit Sira and met a bridal party. Our village had arranged to give a bride to a man of Bir Hain in exchange for one of great beauty and wealth for one of their sons. Both brides started at a given time from their villages accompanied by all the women in their gayest attire, and escorted by mounted men galloping frantically about, performing 'fantasia'. The brides were so muffled up that they could hardly move. The women kept up a chant the whole way. When the two processions came in sight of one another they halted and the brides were dragged off their horses with a good deal of lamentation. . . . The men changed horses and brought back the new brides. They were at once received with great joy, and had to dismount again to receive the congratulations of their new friends."

A subject which was of unending interest to him was the disposition as well as the structure of the Crusading castles, and he continually noted the purposes to which they were put for defence. He became enthusiastic over Kalat esh Shukif,

the Crusading castle of Belfert, "much the finest building in this part of the country", and describes minutely from the engineer's point of view its fortifications and defences. "The Crusaders evidently knew the value of stone walls against the attack of irregular forces. Small garrisons in Belfert and Hunin must have kept the whole of the north secure against raids." He outlines with equal particularity the castles of Kalat el Kurein, the old Crusading "Château de Montfort", and the castle of Banias, at least as fine as Belfert, and called by the natives Kalat es Subeibeh. He photographed most of these castles. He had always a soldier's eye for the country and for its military associations. He made a special journey to identify the Tombs of the Maccabees, and in one place, where an identification was doubtful, he pointed out, by reference to the Scriptural account of what took place when the people of Bethel attacked the Israelites, that there could be, from a military point of view, only one place for Michmash.

There are several dealings with natives:

"North of Kades occur the ruins of a small Crusading fortress called Kalat el Dubbah. It is so shut in by hills that I believe it has never been seen by travellers before. To the west of the castle is the village of Shahrâ where I obtained a copy of an inscription. . . . The sheikh of the village was extremely rude, and threw stones against the inscription while I was endeavouring to copy it. I therefore left without doing so and reported the matter to the Governor, who immediately put the sheikh in prison. The next time I went to the village there was no objection to my copying the inscription. I therefore had the sheikh set at liberty."

And again:

"On the 26th of September we moved camp to Bîs es Seba.[1] We had been warned of some danger from the Arabs in this part but found the country entirely deserted . . . Our journey back was rapid owing to all our bread having gone mouldy, and our provisions run short. Our

[1] It was from this camp that the last stage of the work was entered upon.

first day took us to Dura on the road. At the wells near El Burg some fellahin were watering their flocks of goats. Seeing a mountain-party arrive from the Bedouin country they raised a shout of 'Bedouins'. Away went the goats at a gallop up the hills. This we were used to, and rode on trying to reassure them by shouting 'Soldiers!' when about fifteen men ran together behind some stone walls, and after gesticulating frantically opened fire upon us. The balls whistled by and threw up the dust under our horses' feet; so we pulled up and after some difficulty made them understood who we were. After all we ran more danger from our friends than from the much-dreaded Arabs. At Dura some boys threw stones at Corporal Sutherland, so I had them publicly flogged."

He notes that the country in November was in a much more dangerous state than at any time before in the year, and attributes it to the elation felt by the Mohammedans at having been able to beat so large a Christian Power as Russia.

He thus announced the end of the great work:—

"*Jerusalem, 2nd October*, 1877.—I am sure you will be glad to hear that the map is an accomplished fact, and six years' work has been finished. We wound up at Beersheba, on the 28th of September, much quicker than I had expected. . . . The fact is we had to work hard, the water was so bad, being salt and the colour of weak tea, and our bread all went mouldy. The country we have been in is inhabited only by Arabs, who have been at war among themselves for the last three years. They said no European had ever been in this part of the country before, which I can well believe from the very bad state of the maps of the district. . . . I had some difficulty in getting rid of the expensive escorts the Kaimacam of Gaza wanted to impose upon me, but at last we started with only our own party. We got back here a week earlier than I had calculated upon. From Beersheba I had to take my camels by force, as those that brought us wished to desert and leave us there, in which case we might be there now."

But there was a great deal of clearing up to be done, a good deal of revision, and a number of points which he wished to settle. Almost to the time of leaving Palestine he was

engaged in a struggle with the local authorities about the protection which he wished to afford to the site of Jacob's Well. He had begun by going to Palestine as a surveying engineer; he left it an Oriental—in knowledge and in authority. The East, as it is sometimes expressed, had laid hold of him. There is a passage in one of his few public utterances—it was made at this time—in which he urges the duty of preserving the relics of history in which Palestine is so rich. But in the same sentence, half expressed, is the wish to leave some imprint on that immemorial land.

His actual and practical achievement was considerable. In taking leave of the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund, Lieutenant Kitchener briefly summarized the work that had been done and the results of it which the Fund possessed.

"A completed survey, 1-inch scale, of rather more than 6000 square miles, prepared for publication with hill shading by the Ordnance Department. Twenty-six volumes of memoirs—twenty by Lieutenant Conder, and six by Lieutenant Kitchener—comprising the notes made by the survey party while at work; a reduced map made by Lieutenant Kitchener for the engraver; a number of photographs taken by Lieutenant Kitchener; a number of special plans."

It should be added that, according to a gratified announcement made in the *Quarterly Journal*, Lieutenant Kitchener had done the work at a lower cost than had been estimated. It was a foreshadowing of other work that he was afterwards to conduct, and of which Lord Salisbury said that he was the only general who had ever conducted a campaign for half a million less than he asked for.

The mapping of Palestine did not terminate Kitchener's connection with the Palestine Exploration Fund, but almost as many years as the map had taken to complete went by before he resumed it. In that time he had been in Cyprus, in Anatolia, and had taken service in Egypt. In Cyprus he

had made the 1-inch trigonometrical survey of the island which is the standard survey of the island, and had performed administrative duties respecting the chaotic land tenure of Cyprus; in Anatolia he had helped Sir Charles Wilson, the British Consul-General, to relieve the fugitives who were crowding to the coast towns in consequence of that Russo-Turkish War, the beginning of which is noted in an entry of his Palestine journal; in Egypt he had been employed in the making of the new Egyptian army. The work he undertook in the winter of 1883 was by way of being a holiday excursion, though it was no doubt associated in his mind and in those of his official superiors with the need of obtaining trustworthy information regarding the state of native feeling.

The work of the Palestine survey had been long interrupted through the opposition of the Turkish Government, but in 1883 an opportunity offered to continue it, and Professor Hull, F.R.S., the geologist, who was very much interested in the geology of the region, accepted a proposal made by the Palestine Exploration Fund to investigate the physiographical features of western Palestine, the valley of the Jordan, and the Dead Sea. Kitchener, now become Major Kitchener of the Egyptian army, was nominated by the committee to undertake the topographical survey of the Wady-el-Arabah as far as the shores of the Dead Sea. By so doing he would join up the triangulation of a portion of the Sinai Peninsula with his old triangulation of Palestine—and no doubt the predilection of Kitchener for finishing up a job which he had begun contributed to his willingness to accept this opportunity of doing so. He had with him Armstrong, one of his old non-commissioned officers in Palestine, now retired from the army.

Major Kitchener was a valuable accession to the party, as Professor Hull heartily admits, both because of his experience

of the work and his knowledge of the character and customs of the Arab tribes among which the party was to travel. Professor Hull bears the warmest testimony to the value of Kitchener's help. "It inspired an amount of confidence of ultimate success", he remarks, "which I should not otherwise have felt." One particularly notes the word "confidence" as applied to Kitchener; it was what he always inspired. It was a matter of first importance for the safety of the party that they should have somebody with them who was competent to deal with the Bedouins, for quite recently there had taken place a tragedy of a kind peculiarly alarming to peaceful scientists in this very neighbourhood which they were about to traverse. An exploring-party—Professor Palmer, Lieutenant Gill, and their companions—had been savagely murdered by the Bedouin Arabs; and though the murder had been promptly avenged by Colonel Sir Charles Warren, who captured and executed the murderers, the region was still in what is inadequately described as an unsettled condition. It was Major Kitchener's opinion that the murder had been instigated by agents of Arabi Pasha, and in a letter written to the Palestine Exploration Fund he furnishes a curious piece of corroborative detail:

"I obtained from an Arab of the Hainat tribe a story of the murder which I have never seen published in any account of it. I give it merely for what it is worth; Arabs, as everybody knows who has had to do with them, have a remarkable facility for making up a story to meet a supposed occasion. This was the story in the Arab's own words:

"'Arabi Pasha, directed by the Evil One—may he never rest in peace!—sent to his lordship the Governor of Nakhl to tell him he had utterly destroyed all the Christian ships of war at Alexandria and Suez; also that he had destroyed their houses in the same places, and that the Governor of Nakhl was to take care if he saw any Christians running about in his country, like rats with no holes, that the Arabs were to finish them at once.

"'On hearing this news, a party of Arabs started to loot Ayun Mûsa and Suez. Coming down Wâdy Sudur they met the great Sheikh Abdullah and his party. They thought they were the Christians spoken of by Arabi Pasha, so they surrounded them in the wâdy. But the Arabs ran away from the English, who defended themselves in the wâdy: all night they stepped round them, but did not dare to take them till just at dawn, when they made a rush at them from every side and seized them all.

"'The Arab sheikh who had come with the party ran away with the money.

"'The Arabs did not know Sheikh Abdullah and did not believe his statement, and when he offered money his own sheikh would not give it, so they believed the party were running away from Suez, and so finished them there. Afterwards the great colonel came and caught them and they were finished at Zag ez Zig. May their graves be defiled!'

"Such was the story I heard, and there seems to me to be some amount of truth in it.

"Colonel Sir Charles Warren's energetic action in the capture and bringing to justice the perpetrators of the crime has created a deep impression, and I consider the whole peninsula is for foreign travellers now as safe as, if not safer than, it was previously."

It was no doubt part of Kitchener's intention to ascertain exactly how the tribes stood and what they felt about the state of affairs in Egypt. He says very little on the subject in his journal, but there are one or two passages, such as his description of some Arab tribes, as well as his resolve about the route of his return journey, which indicate what was in his mind. But for the most part his long, carefully written letters to the Palestine Exploration Fund are filled with observations of the topography and archæology of the region. His old interest in these things revived under the spell of their presence, and though his chief preoccupation was his triangulation-work, in pursuit of which he ascended Jebel Musâ and Jebel Harun (the Mountains of Moses and of Aaron) for his "angles of observation", he is often seized with his old enthusiasm.

The following account of his ascent of Mount Hor is like a reminiscence of his old Palestine journal:—

"The eastern hills here recede, leaving a sort of amphitheatre in front of Jebel Harun, the Mount Hor of Scripture, which rises magnificently in the centre. There is a mountain of white limestone immediately south of Mount Hor, over which it towers and gains by the contrast of its dark-red hue over the white. Looking thus at Mount Hor from the south it appears to rise in several pinnacles, the highest of which is surrounded by a glistening white dome covering the tomb of the patriarch Aaron.

"I was very anxious to complete my observations by obtaining a round of angles from the dome of Mount Hor. Next day, therefore, an attempt was made to go up without warning the Arabs; but that was frustrated, as I expected, by the Arabs having heard of our coming and being on the alert. . . ."

However, after a great deal of argument and persuasion the Arabs came to terms, and the party were allowed to ascend by a steep zigzag path to a mountain saddle from which Mount Hor arose, a mountain on a mountain. The morning was very hazy, and observation impracticable for the moment, and they went on therefore to the tomb.

"An old path, similar to that on Jebel Musâ (the Mountain of Moses), with worn steps made out of boulders at difficult parts led up the mountain to another level space from which the highest peak rises abruptly. Passing over some ruined arches on an ancient cistern or building the path leads steeply by steps cut out of the rock to the summit where there is the usual little round dome on a square building covering the tomb of the patriarch Aaron. Looking inside one saw the usual carpet-covered cenotaph with some ostrich eggs hanging over it—all in an uncared-for condition."

They were able, when the day cleared, to make the trigonometrical observations to extend the triangulation to the north; and hence went on to Petra and its tombs, "immense in number, the ornamentations being as fresh and clear as when first

cut, particularly those at Pharaoh's tombs. The colours of the rocks are wonderfully variegated and most brilliant: red to purple and blue are the predominant colours, and these are set off by a cold grey background of limestone hills."

Interspersed with the archæological observations and records of exploration and trigonometrical work are others relating to the Arab tribes, of which Major Kitchener was able to form a shrewd and frank estimate. He notes the Maazi Arabs as thieves and poor; the Taiyyah as having no friends, with a great feud with the Hevveitat family; and the rich Terabin as at peace with their neighbours. But the journey which prospered so well for many pleasant days and weeks came abruptly to an end.

When the party had reached Palestine, on Christmas Eve, 1883, came a message from Sir Evelyn Baring, brought by four Arab messengers on swift camels, telling them of the disaster to Hicks Pasha in the Soudan, and expressing a fear lest the spreading rumours should put the party into a position of danger. Professor Hull's party went on its mission; but the news called Kitchener back from surveying. Egypt was his work in life. He determined to return at once; and with the four Arabs who had brought the message set off on the return journey. He determined to take a direct route to Ismailia, 140 miles across the desert. He writes:—

"As the El Arish road was well known I determined instead to march direct on Ismailia, thus striking out a new line and passing through much more interesting country. One of my party, Abu Suweilim, had been employed by Sir Charles Warren in hunting the murderers of Professor Palmer, and was one of the most energetic, useful Arabs I have ever met; he had been the road we were about to take fifteen years before; the others did not know the road at all, and were of the usual Bedouin type, lazy and greedy. . . .

"We pushed on over open country until dark, when we made our camp-fire on an open plain with a number of Bedouins' fires blazing

round us. I was passed as Abdullah Bey, an Egyptian official passing back to Egypt after having been to Jerusalem, and although it was only borne for that little while, I thus revived the name borne by a much more distinguished traveller, the great Sheikh Abdullah. It was stated thus only to stop the curiosity of the Arabs we met, but I soon found I was called nothing else."

The letter, in spite of all its terse businesslike phrases, furnishes a striking picture of the journey: the halts by wayside wells; the bread baked for the meal; the starlit nights; the sense of space; the never absent spice of danger. It was the life that Kitchener had chosen; and one can well believe that on his way back his mind was busy with expectation of what the future had in store for him and for Egypt, the land of his adoption. Little of all this is perceptible. His dispatch is almost official, especially in these its closing passages:—

"Crossing the ridge (from Jebel el Urf) an immense extent of sand-hills appeared as far as the eye could reach. I do not think I have ever seen so desolate and dreary a country; nothing but ridge after ridge of sand-dunes for an immense distance. The wind blew a strong gale from the west, sending the sand up into our faces so sharply that the camels would at times hardly face it. This wind lasted unfortunately till we were nearly at Ismailia.

"We camped under a sand-hill and had a very cold and windy night. Next morning it was found we had no water. The Arabs are always most improvident about water, and require continual watching. During the night they had used up the last drop, and in the morning said they could not go on without a fresh supply, as there was no chance of water before Ismailia, and they did not know how long it would take to get it. . . . They said they could find rain water in Jebel Felleh."

They had, however, reckoned without their host.

"I, however, insisted on going on, and with some difficulty got the camels under way. Two of my Arabs had been lagging behind for some time, so one of the Arabs and myself went back and drove up

the camels. The other two Arabs were sulky and deserted. . . . However, we got the camels all right.

"Pushing on through a blinding storm of sand over hill and valley, with only the compass to guide us, at 4 p.m. I saw Lake Tumah, and skirting the shore reached the ferry over the canal at dusk. I had some little difficulty in getting the party across the canal and was not sorry when I reached comfortable quarters in Ismailia."

§ 2

It was in September, 1878, that Captain Kitchener went to Cyprus on Government service. Cyprus was occupied and administered by Great Britain after the Russo-Turkish War, according to the provisions of the Cyprus Convention; though it remained nominally Turkish till November, 1914, when, owing to the participation of Turkey in the European War as an ally of Germany, Great Britain formally annexed the island. It has never been one of our prized possessions, though more than one military authority has urged the conversion of its harbour of Famagusta into a second Malta; and Kitchener at one time thought Great Britain might make use of it. His views, which appeared in an article on Cyprus in *Blackwood's Magazine* (August, 1879), were that measures might be taken to raise there friendly territorial forces on a basis similar to that on which the Egyptian army was subsequently organized. He believed and wrote that the Turkish soldier made splendid fighting material, and that all that was wanted to convert him into the most valuable of allies was the provision of good officers, discipline, and commissariat. If we raised and maintained a Turkish regiment in Cyprus we could find out by experience what reforms were necessary. The regiment and the island would become the training-school for officers, and these in their turn could carry out the same reforms in Asia Minor. In case of war we should then have men able to raise troops among the many warlike tribes of

Syria and Asia Minor, and they would be troops who would unhesitatingly follow British officers. By thus employing Cyprus we should make its possession of the highest political importance: we should have in it the key of the East.

These opinions are of the greatest interest. We cannot tell if Lord Kitchener ever relinquished them. He may have done so, since he was member of a cabinet which offered Cyprus to Greece as the price of Greek redemption of its pledges to Serbia; but he was a consistent admirer of the Turk as a soldier, and may have felt that with such a point of vantage as the Island of Cyprus pointing its nose into the Gulf of Alexandretta, on the flank of the Baghdad Railway, we ought to make of Turkey a Power which should be naturally an ally, but should never be allowed to become an enemy. "These Turkish soldiers", he once wrote, "are perfect heroes, enduring any hardships without a murmur. Always ready to fight, never conquered except by overpowering numbers, their motto might well be: 'While we have life we will fight'."[1] Kitchener never had the opportunity to make the experiment he desired with Turkish soldiers, but the precepts he advocated he carried into practice with the far inferior material of the Egyptian fellaheen.

In Cyprus—first under Sir Garnet Wolseley and subsequently under Sir Charles Wilson—his duties were nearly altogether pacific. His survey of the island bears all the marks of his thoroughness and carefulness, and is the only one extant. In addition to preparing it, he was charged with organizing a system of land registration. The task was almost as difficult as that which in another hemisphere the authorities experienced in delimitating the claims in the asphalt crater of Trinidad, which had a knack of disappearing in the night. The allotments were supposed to be marked with stones, as in that scriptural time and locality of which

[1] *Blackwood's Magazine*, February, 1898.

it was written: "Cursed he be who removeth his neighbour's landmark". But the stones generally and frequently disappeared, and the holdings were matters of belief or legend. Baksheesh was a ready means of abrogating a title-deed with a Turkish official, and there were over 40,000 disputed claims to be settled when Kitchener began to superintend this chaos. He did his task, as he did all others, to the complete satisfaction of the authorities, and to all but the corrupt minority in the island, who were anxious to keep things as they were. But while he was thus fulfilling the daily round of pacific work the East was fermenting all about him. From Anatolia to the Sinai Peninsula, and from Alexandria to the Soudan, the call to arms was being heard. In Anatolia, in sharing the difficult task of providing for the refugees who were streaming through Sivas, west of Erzerum, in consequence of the Russian advance, he saw one of the evils of war. In Egypt the new wars were just beginning.

[We wish to express our great indebtedness to the Committee of the Palestine Exploration Fund for their kindness in giving us access to their *Quarterly Reports* containing Lord Kitchener's letters and journals, and for permitting us to make extracts from them. The photograph taken by Lord Kitchener in Palestine is also reproduced by their permission.]

E. S. G.

CHAPTER IV

Lord Kitchener's Early Campaigns in Egypt

Kitchener's First Associations with Egypt—Salient Features of his Egyptian and Soudanese Record—Egypt before the British Occupation—Origin of British Power in Egypt—Ismail's Ruinous Reign—The Story of Arabi Pasha—Kitchener's Share in the Egyptian Campaign of 1882—Evelyn Wood as Sirdar—Kitchener as Second in Command of Egyptian Cavalry—The Rise of Mahdism—Loss of the Soudan—Kitchener and Gordon—How he won over the Mudir of Dongola—His Adventures in Disguise—Bennet Burleigh's Impressions—Kitchener's Efforts to save Gordon—Gordon's Faith in Kitchener—Fall of Khartoum—Kitchener's Official Report.

MANY years before the Great World War, when the German philosophic mind was still sane, when German professors still thought philanthropy worth cultivating, a scholar of their race wrote these words: "When a people has suffered too long it is as much as they can do, in their prostration, to summon up strength enough to kiss the hand that saves them". These pathetic words apply very directly to that wonderful country which, from the very dawn of history, has been the goal of all conquerors, from Menes to Mehemet Ali—"the most important country in the world", as it was emphatically said to be by the greatest of all conquerors, Napoleon, who, early in his career, recognized the commercial and imperial influence of Egypt. With the Suez Canal, which the imagination of Napoleon always pictured as a necessary adjunct, Egypt was to be the keystone, as Dr. Holland Rose tells us in his *Life of Napoleon*, of that "arch of empire which was to span the oceans and link the prairies

of the Far West to the teeming plains of India and the far Austral Isles".

Napoleon's dream of Empire passed; but the remembrance of it was his legacy to the French people, cherished by them down to the time, within living memory, when, finally, at a remote spot on the banks of the Nile, a thousand miles from that Mediterranean bay where Napoleon's fleet was destroyed by Nelson, the long contest for Egypt was decided. It is a far cry from Aboukir to Fashoda; many years separate Nelson from Kitchener; but what Nelson began Kitchener finished; and there still lives to mourn the untimely end of his great and generous rival the gallant Frenchman, Marchand, who met him in the summer of 1897 in that far land, and decided with him there the destiny of Egypt.

The Fashoda incident fell about midway in Kitchener's long association with Egypt. But it is necessary to seize upon that meeting of Kitchener and Marchand as a salient feature of Kitchener's whole career, for, as already pointed out, it revealed him as statesman as well as soldier. Like many other great men, Kitchener was modest and shy, and would not readily have admitted that he was a statesman. He would certainly have denied, probably with some warmth, that he was a politician.

No, Kitchener was no politician, but that he was a statesman will be further proved as time goes on and as he takes his proper place in the perspective of history. And it was in Egypt that his statesmanlike quality was made manifest, in spite of the immense difficulties that beset all who attempt to govern in that remarkable land. These difficulties have been pointed out by all the administrators whom Britain has sent since the day when the power of Arabi the Egyptian was broken at Tel-el-Kebir on 13th September, 1882, and by none better than by Lord Milner, formerly Under Secretary for Finance in Egypt:

"Among the thousands of travellers who annually visit Egypt", he says, "there are perhaps one per cent who, despite the attraction of the ancient monuments of the country and the striking features which characterize its present life, have still some interest to spare for the social and economic conditions on which the welfare of its picturesque inhabitants depends, and for the strange political experiment, unique in history, of which it is the scene. I have a vivid recollection of the look of strained attention, passing through blank bewilderment to ultimate despair, with which they followed my well-meant efforts to guide them amidst the labyrinth of jarring interests, conflicting authorities, and hopelessly disintegrated sovereignty. It is not given to mortal intelligence to master at one blow the complexities of Turkish suzerainty and foreign treaty rights; to realize the various powers of interference and obstruction possessed by Consuls and Consuls-General, by Commissioners of the Public Debt and other 'Mixed Administrations'; to distinguish English officers who are English from English officers who are Egyptian, foreign judges of the International Courts from foreign judges of the Native Courts; to follow the writhings of the Egyptian Government in its struggle to escape from the fine meshes of the Capitulations; to appreciate precisely what laws that Government can make with the consent of only six Powers, and for what laws it requires the consent of no less than fourteen. Imagine a people, the most docile and good-tempered in the world, in the grip of a religion the most intolerant and fanatical. Imagine this people and this faith, congenial in nothing but their conservatism, flung into the maelstrom of European restlessness and innovation. Imagine a country full of turbulent foreigners, whom its police cannot arrest except *flagrante delicto*, and whom its Courts cannot try except for the most insignificant offences. Imagine the Government of this country unable to legislate for these foreigners without the consent of a dozen distant Powers, most of them indifferent and some ill-disposed. Imagine it carrying on its principal business in a foreign tongue, which yet is not the tongue of the predominant foreign race. Imagine it struggling to meet the clamorous growing needs of to-day with a Budget rigorously fixed according to the minimum requirements of the day before yesterday. Imagine the decrees of this Government liable to be set at naught by Courts of its own creation and its policy really inspired and directed by the Envoy of a foreign State, one of a large number of such Envoys, and the chief administrative

power really wielded by a man who in theory is a mere 'Adviser without executive functions'. Imagine all these things and then realize that they are no 'Mikado'-like invention of comic opera, no nightmare of some constitutional theorist with a disordered brain, but prosaic, solid fact. In the Land of Paradox grapes *do* grow from thorns and figs from thistles. The task which Great Britain found upon her hands after Tel-el-Kebir was to all appearance one of the most thankless rôles ever thrust upon an unwilling actor. Unpromising enough in any case, it seemed perfectly hopeless when once we had shrunk from a radical solution of the difficulty and had determined just to make the best of the anomalous situation we found existing and to which our arrival superadded a new anomaly."[1]

Kitchener's association with Egypt began with the events which resulted in Britain's domination—the bombardment of Alexandria and Tel-el-Kebir. In 1881, the year before, he was in Cyprus, where, as related in the preceding chapter, he was continuing the work which had first taken him to the East, the survey of Palestine. When the Egyptian troubles began, with the rise of Arabi to power as head of the Nationalist Party, Kitchener was among the first of those able, adventurous men who were drawn to Cairo from all over the East on the sporting chance of a career. He was then Lieutenant Kitchener of the Royal Engineers, well known as an authority on the holy places of Palestine highly appreciated by the members of the Palestine Exploration Fund, and as an Arabic scholar. He understood the Arab nature as well as the Arab tongue, and in this fact lies the secret, to a great extent, of his extraordinary influence in the regeneration of Egypt, when, in the fulness of time, his genius for administration was required by his country and was exercised with beneficent effect, not only among the down-trodden fellaheen of the Nile delta, but eventually among the inhabitants of the whole Nile region up to the farthest limits of the interior—that mysterious and wonderful Soudan which was revealed to the world by his military genius.

[1] Lord Milner: *England in Egypt.*

It is this aspect of Kitchener's work and character which was so eloquently and accurately dwelt upon by Mr. Asquith, when, in his memorial speech in the House of Commons on the 21st June, 1916, he said: "His name is inseparably associated with that of Lord Cromer in one of the greatest achievements of our race and time—the emancipation and regeneration of Egypt. To his genius we owe the conquest of the Soudan, and to his organizing initiative the process which has ever since gone on, of substituting over a vast, and to a large extent devastated area, civilization for barbarism, justice for caprice and cruelty, a humane and equitable rule for a desolating and sterilizing tyranny."

Such, then, and with these high potentialities of mind and character, was the young Lieutenant of Engineers who joined the throng of adventurous men who saw their opportunity in Egypt when Arabi raised the standard of rebellion. Probably none of those men knew better than Kitchener what was the real significance of the Arabist movement: that it was, as Lord Milner has said, not only a protest against the abuse of European influence, but an attack upon that influence in every form, and that it was passing into an attack not only upon everything European, but upon everything Christian. The British fleet lying off Alexandria with shotted guns and the invading army of Sir Garnet Wolseley were at hand for the suppression of the danger; but no one could then imagine that in that army there was a young English officer of Egyptian cavalry who was to be the regenerator of Egypt, the man of all others who was to carry out the great reforms in the direction of those very ideals which Arabi's National Party had at heart. "The only effective Arabists", says Lord Milner, "that Egypt has ever known are some of the British officials in the Egyptian service." It is interesting to remember that there had already been in Egypt for six years, when Kitchener became an officer in the Egyptian service, a British

official who was destined to be associated with him "in one of the greatest achievements of our race and time"—Evelyn Baring, Lord Cromer—an English Commissioner appointed to the Commission of the Debt.

Ten years were to elapse after the suppression of Arabi's revolt before the young officer of Egyptian cavalry rose to be head of the new Egyptian army. To that period belongs his gradual and continuous assumption of command, his work in training the Egyptian raw material, his perception of the requirements, and his knowledge of the imperfections of the instrument. A picture of him at work has been left on record by Mr. John Macdonald, a *Daily News* correspondent, and it is of singular interest, because it appears to show that even in those days, when the love of adventure was drawing young Englishmen to Egypt, this young man was a marked officer among them. Lieutenant-Colonel A. M. Taylor, commanding the Egyptian cavalry, had invited Mr. Macdonald to accompany him and young Kitchener to witness the operation which they were both to supervise.

"A tall, slim, thin-faced, slightly-stooping figure in long boots, 'cutaway' dark morning-coat and Egyptian fez somewhat tilted over his eyes—such, as I remember him, was the young soldier who was destined to fulfil Gordon's task of 'smashing the Mahdi'.

"'He's quiet,' Taylor whispered to me, as we were getting ready; 'that's his way.' And, again, with a characteristic jerk of his head, 'He's clever.' And so, in the raw early morning of January 8th, 1883, the three of us drove in our dingy rattle-trap over the white dusty road Nilewards to meet the fellah cavaliers. Taylor did most of the talking. Kitchener expressed himself in an occasional nod or monosyllable. At the barracks we found some forty men waiting. I remember Kitchener's gaze at the awkward, slipshod group as he took his position in the centre of a circular space round which the riders were to show their paces. 'We begin with the officers,' said Taylor, turning to me; 'we shall train them first, then put them to drill the troopers. We have no troopers just yet, though we have 440 horses ready for them.' And

LORD KITCHENER IN 1882

as Major of Egyptian Cavalry

From a photograph by Bassano

now began the selection of the fellah officers. They were to be tested in horsemanship. The first batch of them were ordered to mount.

"Round they went, Indian file, Kitchener, like a circus master, standing in the centre. Had he flourished a long whip he might have passed for a show-master at a rehearsal. Neither audible nor visible sign did he give of any feeling roused in him by a performance mostly disappointing and sometimes ridiculous. His hands buried in his trousers pockets, he quietly watched the emergence of the least unfit. In half an hour or so the first native officers of the fellah cavalry were chosen. It was then that Kitchener made his longest speech. 'We'll have to drive it into those fellows,' he muttered, as if thinking aloud."[1]

"It is singular", Carlyle said, "how long the rotten will hold together, provided you do not handle it roughly—so loath are men to quit their old ways and, conquering indolence and inertia, venture on new." The condition of Egypt under the Khedive Ismail, from 1863 to 1879, precisely illustrates that saying of the Sage of Chelsea. Its rottenness, material and moral, was the cause that led to a series of events known for many years as "The Egyptian Question", and to a result which contained within it the full and complete answer to the question. The origin of it all was financial, and may be comprehensively and suggestively stated in a single fact, namely, that when Ismail succeeded in 1863, the public debt of Egypt was £3,293,000, and when he abdicated, in 1879, the funded debt was £68,110,000, and the floating debt £26,000,000. The whole of this borrowed money, except £16,000,000, the cost of the Suez Canal, was squandered by Ismail and the European adventurers who surrounded him with the object of enriching themselves at the expense of the country—apostates, renegades, gamblers; that large Levantine class, in short, who have delicately persuasive manners but no morals.

In 1876 Ismail had to suspend payment of his treasury

[1] *Nineteenth Century*, October, 1898.

bills and institute a Commission of the Public Debt. France, Austria, and Italy had each contributed a Commissioner; Great Britain declined to join. A Khedival decree consolidating the debt was unsatisfactory to Great Britain, and Mr. (afterwards Lord) Goschen went out to look into it. Then "Controllers-General" were appointed, and in 1877 Evelyn Baring, private secretary to Lord Northbrook, Viceroy of India, was selected by Mr. Goschen as a Commissioner of the Debt. And now Ismail had to deal with Europeans of a type quite different from that which he had known before—they were all honest men. Naturally enough he did not fully realize this fact, did not succeed in gaining their confidence, and eventually compelled them to be hostile. Thus came about his downfall. A full enquiry into the financial condition of the country became necessary. Ismail did not invite it, hoping rather to obtain an arbitrary reduction in the rate of interest on the debt without any enquiry except a partial one as to the true amount of the Egyptian revenue. The Commissioners declined this compromise, whereupon Ismail issued a decree authorizing it. There was an explosion of European public feeling, meetings, petitions, negotiations, discussions, extending over five months, until, finally, Ismail yielded, consented to a full enquiry, and was obliged to render a full account of his stewardship to the men who were determined to know the truth. We had to deal, as Lord Cromer said, not with a patient suffering from a specific malady, but with one whose constitution was shattered and whose every organ was diseased. As for the people, the problem was to bring about a change in their habits of thought which would enable them to assimilate a system of administration unfamiliar to them since the days of the Pharaohs.

The Commissioners demanded the following reforms: (1) the principle of Ministerial responsibility, (2) the acceptance by the Khedive of a fixed Civil List, (3) the cession of the whole

of the rural and urban property in land belonging to the Khedival family. Under the advice of Nubar Pasha, Ismail accepted the ultimatum; Nubar and Riaz Pasha became Ministers of the new Constitutional Government; and, most important of all, Sir Rivers Wilson was appointed Minister of Finance and M. de Blignières Minister of Public Works. Thus Europeans were brought into direct contact with the population of the country. The initiation of constitutional government was followed, as all those who knew the East anticipated, by friction between the Khedive and his minister, Nubar. Nubar, an Armenian Christian, was for limiting the personal authority of Ismail in the government of the country, and Sir Rivers Wilson supported Nubar's opinions. Ismail began intriguing against his ministers, secretly convoked the leading men of the "Chamber of Notables", and told them he would not be displeased to see them oppose the European administration which had been forced upon him. There was now wanting only the spark which would fire the magazine. It came from the quarter which would produce the most dangerous effect—the army. Non-payment of salaries had caused great discontent among the officers. The new Ministry decided to pay a portion of the arrears, but at the same time to place a large number on half-pay before giving them the arrears due them.

This was foolish, but to it was added the folly of summoning to Cairo (where there were already 500 officers) the remaining 2000 from various parts of the country to receive a portion of their arrears. The result was that, on 10th February, 1877, Nubar and Sir Rivers Wilson were mobbed by a crowd of officers and dragged to the Ministry of Finance. Here they were with difficulty saved from death by the Khedive himself and Lord Vivian, the British Ambassador. The Khedive, having assured himself of their safety, ordered the rioters out of the building. They obeyed with sullen

reluctance, begging Ismail to let them settle their accounts in their own way. And there arose ominous cries of "Death to the dogs of Christians!" In the courtyard the mob refused to disperse; the Khedive ordered up troops, and there was a serious military riot, in which several on both sides were wounded by revolver-shots and bayonet-thrusts. Eventually order was restored; but next day Ismail declared to the representatives of Great Britain and France that he would not be responsible for public tranquillity unless he were given his proper share in the government of the country. He insisted upon Nubar's immediate retirement from the Ministry. Nubar resigned. As an immediate consequence, the position of the European ministers was shaken, their dismissal followed, and two years from the day of the mutiny of the officers a remoter but far more serious consequence ensued—the revolt of Arabi.

During those two years there were constant dissensions and differences of opinion between the Khedive and his European ministers, and between the European ministers themselves; Great Britain and France did not see Egypt in the same light. Even the British ministers were divided. Lord Vivian was for the system which allowed for Ismail's personal influence; Sir Rivers Wilson was for that which reduced him to a political nullity. Naturally enough, Ismail, who was determined to remain absolute ruler of Egypt, took advantage of all this, and when, after months of intrigue, his own financial and political plans had matured, he struck. A decree was issued naming Cherif Pasha President of the Council, with instructions to form an entirely Egyptian Cabinet.

It was not long before all the abuses and scandals of the old regime were in full force again. In 1879 it became evident to the European Powers that there could be no solution of the Egyptian question while Ismail remained Khedive. In June of that year he was advised by Great Britain and France to abdicate, and finally, under pressure, the Sultan deposed him

and appointed his son, Tewfik, his successor. Lord Cromer thus sums up Ismail's career and fate:—

"He was absolute ruler over a docile people in one of the world's most fertile regions, with power, rank, and wealth such as has been given to few. All this he threw away. A great Nemesis fell upon the Egyptian Crœsus, and when he was deposed at the behests of the Powers there was not a dozen of his own countrymen, albeit they disliked the interference of the foreigner, who did not think he had deserved his fate."

Over the next three years of Egyptian history, though Ismail had vanished from it, brooded his *damnosa hæreditas*. Cherif Pasha resigned, Riaz took his place, and matters between the new Khedive and his suzerain, the Sultan, were on a safer footing. Tewfik's views as to the association of Europeans with his Government were satisfactory, an International Commission was formed to deal with the questions between the Egyptian Government and their creditors. On the whole, the prospects were promising, but there still remained a cloud on the horizon—the shaken *moral* of the army, shaken by the mutiny of February, 1879, and never stable since. And now, towards the end of 1880, a petition was circulating among the officers in the army, in which violent language was used with reference to the European control. And, in fact, although the civil administration of the country had been improved since Ismail's departure, little or nothing had been done for the army.

Two men now came to the front, Ali Bey Fehmi, Colonel of the 1st Regiment, and Ahmed Arabi, an Egyptian, of fellah birth, Colonel of the 4th. They prepared petitions to the Government, setting forth that the Minister of War, Osman Rifki, had treated the Egyptian officers unjustly in the matter of promotions; that he was incompetent to hold so high a position, and that the qualifications of those who had been promoted should be enquired into. The colonels presented

the petition in person to Riaz Pasha, the Premier, and the matter eventually came before the Council of Ministers under the Khedive's presidency, Sir Auckland Colvin and M. de Blignières, the European controllers, being excluded.

The Egyptian Council, thus having the matter in their own hands, foolishly decided to arrest the colonels. They were summoned to appear at the Ministry of War on 1st February, 1881. The colonels thereupon "made all necessary arrangements" with their officers and men, with the result that when they were arrested at the Ministry of War, and were being tried by court martial, the officers and men of their regiments arrived, hustled the Minister of War, smashed the furniture, and liberated the colonels, who then marched at the head of their troops to the Khedive's palace and demanded the dismissal of the Minister of War. The ministers gathered at the palace. Some were for making a fight of it, but the drawback to this idea was that there were no troops on the Khedive's side. News was also to hand that a regiment stationed at Toura, near Cairo, was, "as arranged", then rapidly marching on Cairo. The Khedive therefore sent for the colonels, agreed to dismiss the obnoxious Minister, Osman Rifki, and appoint Mahmoud Baroudi. The two colonels were allowed to keep their commands; they asked and received pardon, and promised to be faithful and loyal hereafter. It was mere humbug on both sides. The Khedive was afraid to disband the mutinous regiments; the colonels mistrusted the Khedive's "pardon", and they disliked Riaz to such an extent that they at once began intriguing for a change of ministry, assisted by the French Consul-General, who was soon recalled to France in consequence. Meantime something had at last been done for the army. The pay of the retired officers had been increased, and it had been publicly announced that for the future every class of officer, Turk, Circassian, or Egyptian, would receive equal treatment.

All seemed to be going on well, but the *damnosa hæreditas* of Ismail was there, brooding like a spectre above Khedive and people. The colonels went in fear of their lives. A commission was appointed to enquire into the grievances of the army. Arabi was on it, and used highly disrespectful language to the Minister of War. Everything that happened within the next few months tended to produce another military crisis, and Arabi was convinced that he was to be murdered. When at last, in September, 1881, the 3rd Regiment of infantry was ordered to leave Cairo for Alexandria, mutiny again broke out. Arabi, at the head of 2500 men, with eighteen guns, marched into the square in front of the Abdin Palace. The Khedive sent for Sir Auckland Colvin, and found in him during the negotiations that followed a firm and brave counsellor and friend. Arabi's demands were the dismissal of all the ministers, the convocation of a Parliament, the increase of the army to 18,000 men. The Khedive agreed to the first demand, on condition that the others should remain in suspense until reference had been made to the Porte. Arabi assented to this and then went on to discuss who should be President of the Council. The announcement that the Khedive would nominate Cherif Pasha was received with cheers. Arabi and the other colonels were then permitted to see the Khedive in the palace and make their submission. The troops quietly withdrew, and the third mutiny of the army came to an end.

Arabi, who was now the recognized head of the Nationalist movement in Egypt, gained daily in strength and influence; he soon became the real ruler of the country, and even sent a petition to Constantinople informing the Sultan that Egypt was falling into the hands of foreigners and becoming Christianized. The Sultan had long seen in the confused affairs of Egypt an opportunity for reasserting his moribund suzerainty. His first idea was to send a Turkish army of occupation. This and the second proposal, that a Turkish

general should be sent, were at once vetoed by Great Britain and France. In the end two "emissaries" were sent. They arrived at Alexandria in October, 1881. The British and French Governments informed the Sultan that they "learnt with surprise and regret of this decision". As an antidote they sent two war-ships to Alexandria. Everyone in Egypt and out of it was anxious to get rid of the Turkish emissaries, and eventually it was agreed that when they left, the ships would also leave.

The beginning of 1882 was occupied with renewed discussions as to the organization of the Ministry. More shifting and shuffling of cards resulted in a new Ministry of which Mahmoud Pashi Sami (Baroudi) was Premier, and Arabi still only "Colonel Arabi Bey", Minister for War, but in reality the arbiter of the destinies of the country. The organ of the Arabist party, the newspaper *El Hedjaz*, described him as "the illustrious and magnanimous Emir, His Excellency Ahmed Bey Arabi". Another Egyptian paper described Egypt as "the prey of two lions, England and France, and hoped one day to see our administrations cleared of all Europeans"; and yet another wrote: "Some pretend that fanaticism is ruinous to progress, yet our best days were those in which we conquered the universe by devotion to our Faith. To-day we have neglected it, and we and our country are in the hands of strangers, but our misfortunes are a just punishment for our sins." Thus by degrees the civil population of Egypt was incited to hatred, and was tainted with the insubordination which had spread through the whole army. The Governments of France and Great Britain were seriously alarmed at the state of affairs. A joint note was addressed to the Khedive, stating the determination of both to support him against all cause of complication, internal or external, which might menace the order of things established in Egypt. The effect of the note in Egypt was disastrous. Arabi was foremost in protest-

ing against unjust interference. But foreign intervention, indeed, had now become an inevitable necessity. In May, 1882, there was another note demanding the temporary retirement from Egypt of Arabi Pashi and the two other colonels (also now Pashas) Ali Fehmi and Abdul-Al and the resignation of the Arabist Ministry. The officers of the regiments at Alexandria informed the Khedive that they would not accept Arabi's resignation. Cairo and all Egypt were in the hands of the military party; the Khedive himself was threatened with death.

And now the Sultan stepped into the ring once more. He sent Dervish Pasha as special Turkish Commissioner to Egypt, and with him, as colleague, Essad Effendi. The instructions given to Dervish and Essad respectively were, to say the least, perplexing. Dervish was to be friendly to the Khedive and hostile to Arabi, while Essad was to cultivate genial relations with the mutineers. Dervish acted up to his instructions. On 10th June, 1882, the Ulema of Cairo came to him in solemn deputation, and one of them, well known as a follower of Arabi, delivered a speech extolling the army for having preserved Egypt from falling into the hands of infidels. At a signal from Dervish the speaker was seized and put out by an attendant of colossal stature, who was always at hand, and went wherever Dervish went.

For some time the population of Alexandria had been in a disturbed state. Europeans were hustled and spat upon; sheiks went about crying: "O Moslems, come and help to kill the Christians!" others called out in the streets that "the last day for the Christians was drawing near". On 11th June the consequences of the efforts made by Arabi and his colleagues to arouse the race-hatred and religious fanaticism of the mob were seen in a cowardly massacre of fifty Christians and the severe wounding of Sir Charles Cookson the British Consul. Already the Arabist army had begun to build batteries on the

shore to resist the dreaded war-vessels of the infidel, and on 3rd July, Lord Alcester (then Sir Beauchamp Seymour) was instructed to destroy the fortifications if the work was not immediately stopped. The French Government declined to co-operate in forcible measures. "The arms of France", they announced, "would not be used without the express consent of the Chamber", and thus it came about that, as the work on the batteries was not stopped, Lord Alcester signalled from the *Invincible* to the *Alexandra* to fire the first shell. Then he ran up a second signal: "Attack the enemy's batteries". By the evening the Arabist forts were laid in ruins, and landing-parties took possession of the burning town (set on fire by the Arabist incendiaries).

When it became known in the port of Alexandria that the British fleet was certainly going to open fire on Arabi's forts and batteries, all the merchant-vessels got up steam and cleared out except the Peninsular and Oriental steamer *Tanjore*, which waited till the last moment for any refugees who might still be remaining in the town. The whole of the ships of the French squadron also steamed out and anchored two miles outside the break-water. Near them the Austrian, Russian, and Italian war-vessels also dropped anchor. The fleet of battleships, cruisers, dispatch-boats, and mail steamers thus lying outside, before the signal for attack was made, presented a very imposing appearance. On one of the ships, an admiring spectator of the bombardment but probably little realizing the significance to himself of its result, was Kitchener, due for return to Cyprus to complete his survey work there.

By the 18th July Europeans began to return to Alexandria. Within two months Arabi was finally crushed at Tel-el-Kebir, and Cairo occupied by British troops. Arabi was arrested within a few days, and before the end of the year (1882) sent into exile.

Thanks to Lord Cromer, the total withdrawal of the British army from Egypt, contemplated by the British

Government after the defeat of Arabi, was averted, and under Lord Dufferin's six months' regime a beginning was made in the reconstruction of the Egyptian army. But the year after Arabi's revolt Egypt was to pass through two more severe trials. In June and July, 1883, the country was ravaged by an outbreak of cholera, in face of which the native officials were helpless, and, except where some British official took matters into his own hands, the country was paralysed. In that same year the Egyptian authorities had the folly to send General Hicks with a force of their old army to attempt the reconquest of some of the already lost provinces of the Soudan. The entire army was destroyed, on advancing into Kordofan from Khartoum, by the Dervishes of Mohammed Ahmed, the Mahdi. The whole Soudan was lost. In February of 1884 Valentine Baker led a force of similar troops from Suakin into the Tokar district on the Red Sea, and that also was completely routed. "The Egyptian troops", Baker reported, "threw down their arms and ran, allowing themselves to be killed without the slightest resistance." At that same time Gordon was on his way to Khartoum. Then followed in quick succession the first British expedition to Suakin, the fall of Berber, the Nile campaign under Wolseley, the fall of Khartoum, the second British expedition to Suakin, the abandonment of the Soudan, and the withdrawal of the British troops from Dongala in June, 1885. Of these events, so fraught with consequence to Egypt and to Britain, so closely connected with the approaching rise to supreme power of the man who was to save Egypt, Lord Milner has spoken memorable words: "The extraordinary refinement of blundering which made our action the ridicule of the world, the splendid acts of gallantry which redeemed our blunders, the hand-to-hand fights of Homeric intensity which are brought to mind by the mention of Abu Klea (January 17th, 1885), Tamai (March 13th, 1884), MacNeill's Zariba (March 22nd, 1885), the lofty tragedy asso-

ciated for ever with the name of Khartoum (January 26th, 1885), are deeply impressed upon the memory of Englishmen."

Gordon's first association with Egypt and the Soudan dates back to 1872, when, on his way home from the Crimea (where he had been inspecting the British cemeteries), he met Nubar Pasha in Constantinople, and was asked whether he would accept the governorship of the Equatorial Provinces of Africa in succession to Sir Samuel Baker. On the resignation of Sir Samuel he received the appointment, and went by way of Khartoum into the interior. There he did great work, but all his efforts to put down the slave-trade were thwarted by Ismail Pasha Yacoub, Governor-General of the Soudan. Gordon resigned his post at the end of 1876, but was prevailed upon to return next year. He now accepted the position of Governor-General of the Soudan as well as of the Equatorial Provinces and the Red Sea littoral, making it a condition that the slave-trade should be finally suppressed. His activities in this work and in the general administration of the immense regions over which he ruled were astounding, and his fame spread all over Central Africa. Suleiman, the slave-dealer, was captured and executed in the Bahr Ghazelle country by Gordon's lieutenant, the Italian, Gessi; Gordon himself destroyed slavery in Darfur, and released thousands of slaves. When the Khedive Ismail was deposed, Gordon resigned, and he was back in England in 1880. In that year he was invited by Sir Robert Hart, the famous Commissioner of Customs at Peking, to go to China—where twenty years before he had won undying renown as the leader of the "Ever-victorious Army" against the Taeping rebels—to advise the Chinese Government in its disputes with Russia. The mission was completely successful. The late King of the Belgians was anxious to secure Gordon's services in the Congo State, but the authorities at the War Office vetoed the proposal. Gordon, with his usual impulsiveness, was about to resign his com-

FIELD-MARSHAL SIR EVELYN WOOD

Who reorganized the Egyptian army after the revolt under Arabi Pasha

GENERAL GORDON

Who perished at Khartoum

From photographs by Elliott & Fry, Ltd., and Chalkey Gould

mission, when, in January, 1884, he was summoned to the War Office by Lord Wolseley. The rise of the Mahdi in the Soudan and the disaster to General Hicks's army had so disconcerted the British Government that they refused to assist Egypt to hold the Soudan any longer, and, indeed, wished to induce the Khedive to abandon it. Gordon's services were required to bring away the Egyptian garrisons. But no definite understanding was arrived at between Wolseley and Gordon, and he at once set off for Brussels and the Congo. The very next day he was recalled to London, and King Leopold lost his services. On the 18th January, 1884, he left England with Colonel Stewart for the Soudan. He was again made Governor-General, was charged to effect the evacuation of the country, and to make such arrangements as might be possible to organize an independent government. He arrived at Khartoum on 18th February, 1884. In the following April he was hemmed in by the Mahdists and cut off from the outer world.

According to a Mohammedan tradition, there will appear on earth in the fulness of time a "Mahdi"—"one who is conducted in the right path"—who will convert all mankind to the Mohammedan faith. There are to be authentic signs when he comes that he is the true Mahdi. He must be a descendant of the Prophet; he must be proclaimed against his will, and only in the mosque of Mecca, and at a time when there is no Khalifa over the Moslems, and when anti-Christ has already come, after whom Jesus will descend and join himself to the Mahdi. When, therefore, the man, Mohammed Ahmed, born in 1843 in the province of Dongola, proclaimed himself to be the Mahdi, he was at once branded by the orthodox Mohammedans in Egypt and elsewhere as spurious. It seems likely that even the ignorant Soudanese, among whom he arose, would have repudiated him also but for their hatred of the Egyptian Government. As it was, they flocked to his

standard, and, after he had gained some successes over Egyptian troops in the earlier days of his career, their adherence became firmer, until at last, at the time when Gordon was at Khartoum in 1884, the Mahdi was the absolute ruler of thousands of fanatical followers.

Against this rising tide of fanaticism which was beginning to flow round Gordon and Stewart, isolated in Khartoum, what protection was there? Colonel Stewart, Gordon's companion, answers the question in one of his official letters:

"The Egyptian infantry is utterly worthless. It is almost impossible for me to convey an idea of the contempt with which all classes of people here regard them. The negro troops will not associate with them, nor, curiously enough, will the Egyptian officers in command of those troops. . . . To advance with our miserable troops against an enemy flushed with recent success, well supplied with arms, and worked up to a pitch of fanaticism would be but to risk a disaster." [1]

In November, 1883, disaster, as already mentioned, came in the annihilation of Hicks's army when it advanced to relieve El Obeid, in Darfur, which was beset by the Mahdi's hordes. Mr. Power, the British Consular Agent, thus speaks of the lost army in one of his published *Letters from Khartoum*:—

"In three days we march on a campaign that even the most sanguine look forward to with the greatest gloom. We have here 9000 infantry that 50 good men would rout in ten minutes, and 1000 cavalry that have never learned to ride. These, with a few Nordenfeldt guns, are to beat 69,000 men whom the Mahdi has got together. That Egyptian officers and men are not worth the ammunition they throw away is well known."

These were the unfortunates who were pitted against the followers of Mohammed Ahmed, the Mahdi, who had stirred to their depths all the passions of the ignorant tribesmen from the day when he first preached to them (on Abba Island, in

[1] Sir F. R. Wingate: *Mahdism and the Sudan*, 1891.

the Nile, a hundred and fifty miles beyond Khartoum) on a theme which at once set their hearts on fire—"the tax-gatherer who twice, three times, and yet again carried off the last goat, the last bundle of dhurra straw. And, why? because of their wickedness; because, since the Prophet left the earth, the world had fallen into sin and neglect. But now the hour was at hand, God would send a deliverer; their hideous dream would be broken for ever; the accursed tax-collector should be driven into holes and caves; the bribed official hurled from the fields he had seized; the Turk should jabber his delirium on his own dunghill. With the coming of the Mahdi oppression should cease. When would he come?" Among the crowd, large-eyed, intent, swayed by these burning words, were some religious teachers more accustomed to preach than the man to whom they were listening. But they recognized their master. "You are our promised leader," they said. "I am the Mahdi," said Mohammed Ahmed. Before a year had passed he was able to write thus to no less a personage than the Sheikh el Islam himself:

"God has confirmed me in my Mahdism and the Prophet has strengthened me in it. . . . I am following in the footsteps of the Prophet and guided by his light. It is said that the Turks can be reformed by preaching. But they can never be reformed except by the sword, unless God has mercy on a few of them. The Prophet told me that all nations should be reformed through me. . . . I am created from the light of his heart. . . . If you had been a really wise man you would never have written to me as you have done; I therefore advise you to save your life while there is yet time. Prefer, rather, to give up family and money and follow me. Then we shall all be participators in the great victory. After this remain no longer in darkness."[1]

The story of the Mahdi's rise brings again on the scene the future Lord Kitchener who, meantime, as described in the previous chapter, had been assisting in 1883 in a survey of

[1] Sir F. R. Wingate: *Mahdism and the Sudan*, 1891.

the Sinai Peninsula for the Palestine Exploration Fund. On returning from Sinai, after the defeat of Hicks Pasha, Kitchener was appointed to the Intelligence Department of the Egyptian army, a post to which such a man at such a time was essential. When the Mahdi's bloodthirsty hordes had gathered round Khartoum in 1884, Kitchener, whose reputation was spreading rapidly in Egypt, was sent south to obtain information about the enemy, and to prevent the further spread of disloyalty and rebellion—a task of great difficulty and danger. In his prime (he was then thirty-four), with nerves of iron, dauntless courage, a commanding presence, wide experience of the East, a complete knowledge of Arabic, what better man, what other man, could be found for such work? The Mudir of Dongola had come under suspicion. Dongola was far up the Nile, above the Third Cataract, and near Korti, which was already under the Mahdi's rule. It was highly advisable to prevent his adherence to the black standard which had advanced thus far towards Egypt. Kitchener set off with a native escort, riding as one of them, wearing the Arab dress, speaking their tongue. News of Kitchener's doings at Dongola had reached Gordon at Khartoum in a letter from Baker Pasha. Gordon quotes it in his journal: "The man whom I have always placed my hopes upon, Major Kitchener, R.E., who is one of the few very superior British officers, with a cool and good head and a hard constitution, combined with untiring energy, has now pushed up to Dongola, and has proved that the Mahdi is dependable." To this Gordon adds: "I like Baker's description of Kitchener", and, later: "If Kitchener would take the place he would be the best man to put in as Governor-General." Mr. Bennet Burleigh, of the *Daily Telegraph*, who also had made his way up the Nile to Dongola and El Debbeh, has given us a glimpse of Kitchener at this time.

"To my astonishment and delight", he says, "I found one Englishman within the mud walls of Debbeh—Captain Kitchener, R.E. He

gave me a hearty welcome, and added to my debt of gratitude by producing two bottles of claret, his whole store, which we drank most loyally at dinner. For weeks he had not heard the English tongue spoken, and naturally he was glad to see a countryman able to tell him something of what was happening outside the Soudan. In manner he is good-natured, a listener rather than a talker, but readily pronouncing an opinion if it is called for. All his life he has been *par excellence* a volunteer soldier—volunteering time and again for one difficult and dangerous duty after another."

Kitchener at Dongola and El Debbeh was a link, and a most important one, between Gordon at Khartoum and the outer world. It is hardly an exaggeration to describe his position as an advanced post of the Intelligence Department in the enemy's country. He carried his life in his hands while gathering information from the enemy. It is said that one day he was present at the execution of a supposed spy who was tortured so horribly that Kitchener obtained a small bottle of cyanide of potassium and always carried it with him in these wanderings. "Death at their hands", he said, "I did not fear; in fact I expected it. But such a death——!" Another incident vouched for by one of his relatives shows his courage and resource. Two Arab spies had been caught and confined in a tent. They pretended to be deaf, and Kitchener could get nothing out of them. Very soon another spy was captured and promptly pushed into the tent. The three started to talk, freely exchanging confidences. The third spy then demanded to be taken to head-quarters. It was Kitchener himself, disguised. He had found out all he wanted to know. His talent for disguise was so extraordinary that even his own people did not know him after he was "made up". A soldier once flung a stone at him, thinking he was a "blooming nigger" who had no business to be prowling about.

In 1884 Kitchener was appointed Deputy Assistant

Adjutant and Quartermaster-General on the Intelligence Staff, and while at Dongola received and transmitted to Gordon the news that the British Government had at last made up their minds to dispatch a relief expedition to Khartoum. The lonely sentinel on the Mahdi's frontier also sent word to Colonel Stewart, who was with Gordon, that the force would evidently come that way, but that he did not know whether they would go on by way of Berber or attempt the direct road by the desert across the great bend of the Nile between Korti and Metammeh. Stewart left Khartoum with messages and reports from Gordon in September, 1884. His steamer ran on a rock near the village of Hebbah, having thus almost reached safety. Stewart landed, was persuaded to go unarmed into the village, and was there treacherously murdered.

In December the Nile Expedition reached Korti, and by the end of the month Wolseley was ready to advance farther. The expedition was to proceed in two divisions: one, under Sir Herbert Stewart, to take the desert route across the bend of the Nile, the other, under General Earle, to follow the river to Berber. Sir Herbert Stewart's advance force started on the 30th December, and Kitchener accompanied it as far as the Jakdul Wells, half-way across. Count Gleichen, in his book, *With the Camel Corps up the Nile*, tells us how "occasionally during the day an officer or sentry on outpost would spot a native miles off in the plain, and the Intelligence Department, still happily represented by Major Kitchener, would promptly saddle any beasts that came to hand and scoot out after him. Several times the reconnaissance-party captured and scattered a caravan bringing dates and stores for the Mahdi, and we soon had quite a respectable number of prisoners." Sir Charles Wilson, the head of the Intelligence Department, tells us, too, of an afternoon spent with Kitchener, who had established himself in a cave on the side of the hill. He had caught several men carrying dates to the enemy.

On the day that Sir Herbert Stewart's force left Korti a messenger arrived in camp with a tiny piece of paper on which were the words: "Khartoum all right, 14/12/84.—C. G. Gordon". It was Gordon's hand, and his seal was on the back of the paper. The messenger, however, brought also this verbal message: "Our troops at Khartoum are suffering from lack of provisions. The food we still have is little: some grain and biscuit. We want you to come quickly." It was clear, then, that if Gordon was to be saved there was no time to be lost. Sir Herbert Stewart finally started from Korti on 8th January, 1885, with 1600 men and 2400 camels and horses, with orders to cross the desert to Metammeh, leave a strong detachment there, and then to return to Jackdul. Kitchener did not accompany the force, having, to his bitter mortification, been ordered to return to Korti with a convoy which left Jackdul on the 14th. On the 17th January the desperate fight of Abu Klea was fought with a loss to us of 18 officers and 150 men, and of over 1100 killed to the enemy. On the 18th the British force went on to the Nile at Metammeh. It was attacked again within sight of the river, and Sir Herbert Stewart was killed. Sir Charles Wilson took command, repulsed another attack on the 19th, reached Metammeh, and moved on to Gubat.

On the 21st four steamers, sent out from Khartoum by Gordon, arrived there. They brought Gordon's journal and some letters, in one of which, dated 14th December, he said he expected a catastrophe in the town in ten days. On a small piece of paper was written the latest news from him: "Khartoum is all right. Could hold out for years.—C. G. Gordon; 29/12/84." This was known to be intended to deceive the Dervishes in case the letters fell into their hands. The steamers, as already stated, arrived on 21st January. For three days they were employed in making reconnaissances up and down the river, and it was not until the 24th that two

of them, one with Sir Charles Wilson on board with detachments of British and native troops, started up river for Khartoum. Sir Charles Wilson's steamer struck on a rock at the Sixth Cataract, and this caused a delay of twenty-four hours. On the 27th the boats came under musketry-fire from the banks, and on that day, while stopping near the village of Tamaniat, a man called out from the shore that Khartoum had fallen, and that Gordon was killed. No one on board believed him. On the next day, under heavy fire of musketry and artillery, the steamers were in sight of the Government House at Khartoum. No signs of the Egyptian flag were visible, and a further advance showed that the Government House had been wrecked. The Arab on the bank had spoken truly! The steamers put about. Both were lost on the return journey, but those on board were rescued by Lord Charles Beresford, who had taken a party up stream. It was on the 26th January, 1885, the day when Wilson's steamers were at the foot of the Sixth Cataract, that the Government House was attacked and Gordon killed. "The delay in starting from Gubat", says Lord Cromer in his book, *Modern Egypt*, "has formed the subject of much discussion. The conclusion at which I have arrived, after a careful examination of all the facts, is that if the steamers had left Gubat on the afternoon of the 21st (the day they arrived there from Khartoum) they would probably have reached Khartoum in time to save the town."

Too late! The fatal news reached England on the 5th February, 1885. Writing later to Lord Cromer, Sir Henry Ponsonby, the Queen's private secretary, says: "The Queen was in a terrible state about the fall of Khartoum. She was just going out when she got the telegram. She went to my cottage, walked into the room, pale and trembling, and said to my wife, who was terrified at her appearance 'Too late!'"

Sir Reginald Wingate, who was in after years Sirdar of the Egyptian army, has said the last word on the subject: "Neither treachery in the besieged nor the stratagems of the besiegers caused the fall of Khartoum. It fell through starvation and long neglect. There were no elements of chance in the expedition to relieve General Gordon. It was sanctioned too late."

One wonders what was the opinion of that silent officer of the Intelligence Department whose immediate chief was in command in the Nile steamer off Khartoum on that fatal day in January, 1885. He said but little, probably; what he did was to resign his commission in the Egyptian army and to return to England. But meantime it fell to him, and a painful duty it must have been, to report in his official capacity upon the fall of Khartoum and the death of its heroic defender.

It was compiled from all available sources, and is worth quoting *in extenso*, not only a document of great historic importance, but also as a further example of Kitchener's literary style. It is printed in the official Parliamentary Paper, "Egypt No. 2 (1886)," and is as follows:—

"The last accurate information received about Khartoum is contained in General Gordon's diary, and dated 14th December, 1884. The state of the town was then very critical, and General Gordon states 'the town may fall in ten days'. The fort of Omdurman had been cut off from communication with Khartoum since the 3rd November; it was at that date provisioned for one and half months, and the commandant, Farag Allah Bey, had requested further supplies of ammunition. The garrison may therefore be considered to have been in great difficulties for food and necessaries after the 20th December. General Gordon had so weakened himself by sending away five steamers (four to meet the English expedition and one with Colonel Stewart) that he found it impossible to check the Arabs on the White Nile, and therefore to keep open communication with the fort of Omdurman. According to General Gordon's statement there were in the stores at Khartoum,

on the 14th December, 83,525 okes of biscuit and 546 ardebs of dhourra. From the almost weekly statement of the amounts in store it is calculated that although General Gordon was able to reduce considerably the issue of dhourra, the biscuit ration to the troops had not been reduced up to the 14th December. The amount in store would represent approximately 18 days' rations for the garrison alone.

"Gordon had already, on 22nd November, found it necessary to issue 9600 lbs. of biscuit to the poor, and he then says, 'I am determined if the town does fall, the Mahdi shall find precious little to eat in it.' There is little doubt that as the siege progressed it was found necessary to issue a considerable amount of provisions to the poorer native inhabitants of Khartoum. It may therefore be considered that even on reduced rations the supply in store must have been almost if not quite exhausted about 1st January, 1885. The town was then closely encircled by the rebels, who doubtless increased the intensity of their attack as they approached nearer and nearer to the works. The Mahdi was fully aware from deserters of the straits to which the garrison were reduced from want of food, and it was his intention that the town should fall into his hands without fighting, being obliged by famine to surrender. About the 6th January General Gordon, seeing that the garrison were reduced to great want of food and that existence for many of the inhabitants was almost impossible, issued a Proclamation offering to any of them who liked free permission to leave the town and go to the Mahdi. Great numbers availed themselves of this permission and General Gordon wrote letters to the Mahdi requesting him to protect and feed these poor Muslim people as he had done for the last nine months. It has been estimated that only about 14,000 remained in the town out of a total of 34,000, the number obtained by a census of the town in September.

"General Gordon kept heart in the garrison by Proclamations announcing the near approach of the English Relief Expedition, and praising them for the resistance they had made, as well as by the example of his unshaken determination never to surrender the town to the rebels. It appears probable that the fort of Omdurman fell into the hands of the rebels on or about the 13th January. The garrison were not injured and Farag Allah Bey, the Commander, was well treated in the rebel camp as an inducement for any waverers in the Khartoum garrison to join the

Mahdi's cause. The fall of Omdurman must have been a great blow to the garrison of Khartoum, who thus lost their only position on the west bank of the White Nile. The Arabs were able then by the construction of batteries along the river bank entirely to close the White Nile to Gordon's steamers. Having accomplished this they could establish ferries on the White Nile south of Khartoum and have constant and rapid communication from Omdurman village and camp to their position along the south front.

"About the 18th January, the rebel works having approached the south front, a sortie was made by the troops which led to desperate fighting. About 200 of the garrison were killed, and though large numbers of the rebels were said to have been slain it does not appear that any great or permanent advantage was obtained by the besieged garrison. On the return of the troops to Khartoum after this sortie General Gordon personally addressed them, praising them for the splendid resistance they had made up to that time and urging them still to hold out as relief was near; indeed that the English might arrive any day, and all would then be well.

"The state of the garrison was then desperate from want of food, all the donkeys, dogs, cats, rats, &c., had been eaten; a small ration of gum was issued daily to the troops and a sort of bread was made from pounded palm-tree fibres. Gordon held several councils of the leading inhabitants and on one occasion had the town most rigorously searched for provisions; the result, however, was very poor, only yielding 4 ardebs of grain through the whole town. This was issued to the troops. Gordon continually visited the posts and personally encouraged the soldiers to stand firm. It was said that during this period he never slept. On the 20th January the news of the defeat of the Mahdi's picked troops at Abu Klea created consternation in the Mahdi's camp. A council of the leaders was held and it is said a considerable amount of resistance to the Mahdi's will and want of discipline was shown. On the 22nd the news of the arrival of the English on the Nile at Metammeh, which was thought to have been taken, led the Mahdi to decide to make at once a desperate attack on Khartoum before reinforcements could enter it. It is probable that next day the Mahdi sent letters to Farag Pasha, commanding the black troops, who had previously been in communication with him, offering terms for the surrender of the town and stating that the English had been defeated on the Nile.

Rumours were also prevalent in Khartoum of the fighting at Abu Klea and the arrival of the English at Metammeh.

"On the 23rd General Gordon had a stormy interview with Farag Pasha. An eye-witness states that it was owing to Gordon having passed a fort on the White Nile which was under Farag's charge and found to be inadequately protected. Gordon is said to have struck Farag on this occasion. It seems probable to me that at this interview Farag proposed to Gordon to surrender the town and stated the terms the Mahdi had offered, declaring that in his opinion they should be accepted. Farag left the palace in a great rage, refusing the repeated attempts of other officers to effect a reconciliation. On the following day General Gordon held a council of the notables at the palace. The question of surrender was then discussed, and Gordon declared that, whatever the council decided, he would never surrender the town. I think it very probable that on this occasion Gordon brought Farag's action and proposals before the council, and it appears that some in the council were of Farag's opinion that the town could resist no longer and should be surrendered on the terms offered by the Mahdi. Gordon would not, however, listen to this proposal.

"On the 25th Gordon was slightly ill and as it was Sunday he did not appear in public. He had, however, several interviews with leading men of the town and evidently knew that the end was near. It has been said that Gordon went out in the evening and crossed the river to Tuti Island on board the *Ismailia* to settle some dispute among the garrison there. This statement has not been verified, but owing to it the rumour subsequently arose among the black troops in Omdurman that Gordon had escaped. On the night of the 25th many of the famished troops left their posts on the fortifications in search of food in the town. Some were too weak to go to their posts. This state of things was known in the town and caused some alarm. Many of the principal inhabitants armed themselves and their slaves, and went to the fortifications in place of the soldiers. This was not an unusual occurrence; only on this night more went as volunteers than they had done on previous occasions.

"At about 3.30 a.m. on Monday, 26th, a determined attack was made by the rebels on the south front. The principal points of attack were the Boori Gate at the extreme east end of the line of defence on the Blue Nile and the Mesalamieh Gate on the west side near the

Photo Underwood & Underwood

THE GOVERNOR'S PALACE, KHARTOUM

White Nile. The defence of the former post held out against the attack but at the Mesalamieh Gate the rebels, having filled the ditch with bundles of straw, brushwood, beds, &c., brought up in their arms, penetrated the fortifications, led by their Emir, Wad-en-Nejumi. The defenders of the Boori Gate, seeing the rebels inside the fortifications in their rear, retired, and the town was then at the mercy of the rebels.

"General Gordon had a complete system of telegraphic communication with all the posts along the line of fortification and there must have been great irregularity in the telegraph stations to account for his being left entirely unwarned of the attack and entry of the rebels. Doubtless Farag Pasha was responsible to some extent for this. Farag has been very generally accused of having either opened the gates of Khartoum himself or to have connived at the entrance of the rebels, but this has been distinctly denied by Abdullah Bey Ismail, who commanded a battalion of irregular troops at the fall of the town, as well as by about thirty refugee soldiers who lately escaped and came in during the last days of the English occupation of Dongola. The accusations of treachery have all been vague and are to my mind the outcome of mere supposition. Hassan Bey Balmasawy, who commanded at the Mesalamieh Gate, certainly did not make a proper defence and failed to warn Gordon of the danger. He afterwards appears to have taken a commission under the Mahdi and to have gone to Kordofan with the Emir Abu-Anga. In my opinion Khartoum fell from sudden assault when the garrison were too exhausted by privations to make proper resistance. Having entered the town, the rebels rushed through the streets shouting, and murdering everyone they met, thus increasing the panic and destroying any opposition.

It is difficult to make out from the confused accounts exactly how General Gordon was killed. All the evidence tends to prove it happened at or near the palace, where his body was subsequently seen by several witnesses. It appears that there was one company of black troops in the palace besides General Gordon's cavasses; some resistance was made when the rebels appeared but I think this was after General Gordon had left the palace."

Then follows a short account of the manner of Gordon's death, of which "various accounts have been related from hearsay".

The account accepted later was that he was killed with spear-thrusts at the door of the Divan (Council Chamber) of the palace by Sheikh Mohammed Nebawi and Taha Shashin.

"The Soudan custom of beheading and exposing the heads of adversaries slain in battle was apparently carried out, as was done by the Mudir of Dongola after the battle at Korti. The Bagara savages seem to have had some doubt which was Gordon's body, and great confusion occurred in the Mahdi's camp at Omdurman where the heads were exposed as to which was Gordon's, some recognizing, others denying the identity. One apparently reliable witness relates that he saw the rebels cut off Gordon's head at the palace gate after the town was in their hands. The massacre in the town lasted some six hours, and about 4000 persons at least were killed. The black troops were spared, except those who resisted at the Boori Gate and elsewhere. Large numbers of the townspeople and slaves were killed and wounded. The Bashi Bazouks and white regulars, numbering 3327, and the Shaigia irregulars, numbering 2330, were mostly all killed in cold blood after they had surrendered and been disarmed. Consul Hansel was killed in his own house. Consul Nicola, a doctor, and Ibrahim Bey Fauzi, who was Gordon's secretary, were taken prisoners; the latter was wounded.

"At about 10 a.m. the Mahdi sent over orders to stop the massacre, which then ceased. The rebels fell to looting the town, and ordered all the inhabitants out of it; they were searched at the gate as they passed and were taken over to Omdurman, where the women were distributed as slaves among the rebel chiefs. The men, after being kept as prisoners under a guard for three days, were stripped and allowed to get their living as best they could.

"It has been stated that the Mahdi was angry when he heard of General Gordon's death, but though he may have simulated such a feeling on account of the black troops, there is very little doubt, in my opinion, that, had he expressed the wish, Gordon would not have been killed. The presence of Gordon as a prisoner in his camp would have been a source of great danger to the Mahdi, for the black troops from Kordofan and Khartoum all loved and venerated Gordon, and many other influential men knew him to be a wonderfully good man. The want of discipline in the Mahdi's camp made it dangerous for him to keep as a prisoner a man whom all the black troops liked better than himself, and in favour of whom, on a revulsion of feeling, a successful

revolt might take place in his own camp. Moreover, if Gordon was dead he calculated the English would retire and leave him in peace. The Mahdi had promised his followers as much gold and silver as they could carry when Khartoum fell, and immense disappointment was expressed at the failure to find the Government treasury. Three days after the fall of the town Farag Pasha was brought up to show where the Government money was hid. As he was naturally unable to do this, owing to there not being any, he was killed on the public market-place at Omdurman. Many others were put to torture to disclose where their wealth was hid, with varying results.

"On the third day after the fall of Khartoum many of the prisoners saw Sir Charles Wilson's steamers off Tuti Island with the English on board; some were present in the batteries at Omdurman when the rebels opened fire on the steamers.

"The number of white prisoners in the Mahdi's camp has been variously stated. A Greek, escaped from Khartoum, reports when the place fell there were 42 Greeks, 5 Greek women, 1 Jewess, 6 European nuns and 2 priests. Of these 34 Greeks were murdered. The survivors are all at liberty but in extreme poverty.

"Abdullah Bey Ismail relates that 'all the European ladies are at Omdurman, living in a zeriba, where they form a little colony guarded by the European men. They earn a meagre sustenance by sewing, washing, &c. Not a single one was taken by the Dervishes; they all wear Moslem dress.' A letter from the Mahdi was received relative to the white prisoners, who, he declared, preferred to remain with him. The document bears 96 signatures of Europeans, but some of them are undoubtedly spurious, as that of Father Luigi Bonomi, who has since escaped from El Obeid, never having been at Khartoum. A large number of the Bagara Arabs left the Mahdi shortly after the fall of Khartoum, much disgusted at their failure to obtain a larger amount of loot. On the Mahdi attempting to bring them back by force they joined the party in Kordofan who are now fighting against the Mahdi's cause.

"The memorable siege of Khartoum lasted 317 days, and it is not too much to say that such a noble resistance was due to the indomitable resolution and resource of one Englishman. Never was a garrison so nearly rescued, never was a commander so sincerely lamented.

"H. H. KITCHENER, Major."

Such was the narrative, compiled at Dongola by the adventurous officer of the Intelligence Department, of the terrible events of January, 1885. Adventurous, enterprising, ambitious though he was—one of the "very superior officers" of the army, in Baker's phrase—he could not have imagined that, thirteen years later, he would himself be at the head of the avenging army which was destined to sweep the conquerors of Khartoum in red ruin off the face of the earth.

W. H.

CHAPTER V

Preparing the Reconquest of the Soudan

Death of the Mahdi—Kitchener returns to England—Boundary Commission in Zanzibar—Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral—At Grips with Osman Digna—Kitchener wounded—A.D.C. to Queen Victoria—With Sir Francis Grenfell at Gemaizeh—Kitchener and his Soudanese Troops—His Share in the Victories at Gemaizeh and Toski—Sir Samuel Baker's Tribute—Kitchener succeeds Grenfell as Sirdar—Current Criticism of the Appointment—Lord Cromer and the New Sirdar—Accession of Abbas II—His Sneer at the Sirdar's Egyptian Soldiery—His Punishment—Reconquest of the Soudan decided upon—Slatin Pasha's Escape—The Story of the Dongola Expedition—First Stage of the Reconquest completed.

GORDON died a hero's death on the 26th January, 1885. His head, taken to the Mahdi in his camp at Omdurman, was fixed in the fork of a tree for all who passed to stone. Meantime, the man who might have saved his life with a single word was busy choosing from among the captured women and girls of Khartoum those that pleased him best. He made his own selections on the day that Gordon died, and turned over the rejected ones to his khalifas and emirs. These were the women for whom, in pity, when the town was reduced to starvation, Gordon set aside the rations which were intended for the garrison. For days after the death of their kind and generous protector they were the victims of unbridled excesses. Among them was one who was destined to be the avenger of Gordon, a woman of Khartoum, daughter of a townsman who had lost all in the siege, property, wives, children—all save this one. She had to submit to shameful outrage by the Mahdi, and in revenge gave him a deadly poison, of which he died within a week. This was on the 22nd June, less than five months after Gordon's death.

As in Gordon's case, so in that of his murderer, there is some doubt as to the exact manner of his death. It was given out at the time that the Mahdi had died of smallpox, and in view of the well-known ravages of that fell disease in Central Africa there was no difficulty in accepting that explanation. Others, who knew the East and its ways, found the easiest explanation in "other agencies" which were at work at Cairo and Constantinople. As Sir Wilfrid Blunt says, in his *Gordon at Khartoum*, the Mahdi's was a great personality in the Soudan; he inspired the religious hopes of Mohammedan Egypt, and was regarded among the lower classes as the coming deliverer from the domination of the hated Christian. At Constantinople he had become a dangerous rival to the Sultan himself. The Mahdi's death was undoubtedly fatal to the future of the Soudan as a permanently powerful theocracy. But even on his deathbed, effeminate, debauched wretch as he was, he took care to secure the "divine" succession. Already, long before, he had issued a proclamation to his followers that Abdullah et Taashi (a Baggara chief—brave, unscrupulous, and extremely cunning) was to be his Khalifa, to be believed in, obeyed, and reverenced as his agent in carrying out the will of the Prophet. With his last breath he murmured to those around him: "The Khalifa Abdullah has been appointed by the Prophet as my successor. He is of me and I of him; obey him as you have obeyed me. May God have mercy upon me!" Then, as his remaining strength failed, he repeated the Mohammedan creed: *La Illaha illallah Mohammed Rasul Allah*—"There is no God but God, Mohammed is the Prophet of God"—stretched out his limbs, and died. His grave was dug in the room in which he breathed his last, and over it afterwards rose the *kubbeh*, or dome, about fifty feet in height, which, when the avenging hosts of Kitchener drew near, years after, was the most conspicuous object in Omdurman.

The Khalifa Abdullah was at once installed as the Mahdi's

successor. He issued proclamations "to all his friends in God", in one of which he said: "Know that the hand of God, which is supporting us, has not been withdrawn by the Mahdi's death. Izrail is still holding up the flag of victory. The Prophet Mohammed is still at the head of the army and the sword of victory has been handed down to me by the Mahdi and is now in my hands. It will make all true followers of the faith victorious. Neither the Fairies nor the Jinns are able to subdue them." For many years Abdullah ruled the Soudan with a rod of iron. He was a man of exceptional ignorance, but of great determination; cruel, malicious, intensely vain. His private life was not remarkable for the ascetic virtues which he fervently enjoined in his public preaching. Among his most trusted henchmen was one whose business it was to report upon all the good-looking women he saw, and, when such a report had been handed in, to advise the husband of the selected lady to divorce her at once, as any attempt to evade doing so would result in his immediate execution. No one was allowed to look straight at the Khalifa; no one could enter his presence but on all fours, with eyes fixed on the ground. He was addressed as "Ya Sidi". Once when a poor old Egyptian soldier addressed him as "Effendim" (the respectful Turkish salutation), he was at once so mercilessly beaten by the body-guard with the butt-ends of their spears that he died a few days after. Fourteen years after the death of his master, the Mahdi, Abdullah met his own end, a fugitive in the desert, hunted down and destroyed, with all his emirs, like mad dogs, by an Egyptian force. That was the *coup de grâce* to Mahdism in the Soudan, administered by the Sirdar, Sir Reginald Wingate, and made possible by the Sirdar, Sir Herbert Kitchener. From that day to this Egypt has enjoyed what is essential to her existence—dominion over the Nile from the equatorial lakes to the sea.

After the disaster of Khartoum, which violently excited the public and left the costly Nile Expedition, so to speak, "in the air", Lord Wolseley, its leader, to whom the result had been a great and cruel disappointment, wished to issue a proclamation to the Soudanese peoples that it was his mission to utterly destroy the power of the Mahdi at Khartoum. This proclamation, Lord Cromer tells us, was originally drafted in short, jerky sentences, with a Napoleonic ring to them, under the impression that it would deeply impress the Soudanese. It was translated into Arabic, and Lord Cromer asked a talented Egyptian friend of his to tell him what he thought of it. He said that he understood what it meant, but that to the Soudanese it would be quite incomprehensible. Lord Cromer asked his friend to put the ideas of the proclamation into different language, and "the result was an extremely eloquent document, which reminded me," he says, "more especially in its vituperative passages, of a chapter in Isaiah".[1] But the proclamation was never issued in any form, for the British Government, sorely perplexed as to what to do, and severely blamed by the public for what they had already done and left undone, now decided not only not to destroy the Mahdi but to let him alone altogether. The expedition being massed at Dongola, the question arose whether it should stay there or fall back. Lord Wolseley advised: "Hold on to Dongola; retreat will necessitate increased garrisons in Egypt". Sir Redvers Buller said: "The Soudan will never be quiet until the Mahdi is disposed of". Sir Charles Wilson's opinion was that "the control of the Soudan was necessary to Egypt". Lord Cromer thought it would be "politically unwise and undignified to retire from Dongola". Colonel Kitchener said: "I deprecate leaving the Mahdi this fresh lease of life and power". The Government, having taken everyone's opinion, maintained their own, and decided that the army should retire

[1] *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II, p. 26.

to Wady Halfa as the advance post of Egypt towards the Soudan.

Kitchener's work in connection with the Relief Expedition was now, of course, at an end. He and Lieutenant Rundle had done good work in securing such communication as was possible between Cairo and Khartoum. Kitchener had made expeditions from Dongola and other places on the river among the Besharin and Ababdeh tribes. He established desert posts, had a satisfactory meeting with Besharin chiefs, made reconnaissances into the desert east of the Nile, and negotiated with the sheikh of the Kababish tribe, whose country extended between Dongola and Kordofan—all difficult and dangerous duties, and all carried out with tact, skill, and courage. And when the Nile Expedition advanced, all these services, and those he rendered to the expedition itself, proved to be of great value. He now resigned his commission in the Egyptian army and returned to England. In June, 1885, he was promoted to the rank of Lieutenant-Colonel.

We are indebted to the veteran journalist, Mr. Thomas Catling, for an interesting glimpse in his reminiscences, *My Life's Pilgrimage*, of Kitchener during this interval in England. Mr. Catling was at a rehearsal of the play, *Human Nature*, at Drury Lane, and was introduced by Augustus Harris, the manager, to his next neighbour in the stalls—Colonel Kitchener. "We chatted together for some time about plays and kindred subjects. *Human Nature* has in it a stirring military scene, and as this battle scene opened it was arranged in the form of a square, surrounded by a low wall of Oriental pattern. The soldiers came at the wall with a springing leap and tumbled over on to the stage. Kitchener jumped up and cried: "No, no, that won't do!" Harris, who was at the corner of the stage, immediately told the players and troops to do exactly as the Colonel bade them, and the scene, thus revised, became far more effective, and proved a lasting lesson to the manager.

Ever afterwards he strove to have all technical details in regard to the action and mounting of a play made as correct as expert judgment could render them.

At the beginning of 1885, when it became known that the Germans had ordered a vessel of war to Zanzibar, with the German Consul-General on board, there was uneasiness in British Government circles as to what might be the meaning of this action. Had the Germans intentions and schemes in that country which might be detrimental to the independence of the Sultan and the interests of Great Britain *and India*? Extensive correspondence on the subject ensued between Lord Granville, Count Münster, the German ambassador in London, Bismarck, Lord Salisbury, and others; always polite in tone, always diplomatic, of course, but with a touch here and there of gentle sarcasm and mild irritation which betrayed the importance of the matter in dispute—how important has been proved in later days when German East Africa, which grew out of those discussions of 1885, became the theatre of furious warfare.

It was decided in 1885 that the territorial claims of the Sultan of Zanzibar on the mainland should be submitted to a Delimitation Commission, composed of commissioners from Germany, France, and Great Britain, and that the commissioner for Great Britain should be Lieutenant-Colonel Kitchener. The appointment was thus worded in notes from Lord Salisbury to the ambassadors of the two Powers: "I have to inform Your Excellency that Lieutenant-Colonel Kitchener, of the Royal Engineers, has been appointed Her Majesty's Commissioner on the Commission for the delimitation of the territories of the Sultan of Zanzibar". The duties of the British and other commissioners were "to determine the value of the titles on which the authority of the Sultan of Zanzibar was based, the extent of territories over which it was claimed, along the coast and in the interior, and to collect all necessary

evidence, in documents and in statements by the various tribes. Kitchener's colleagues on the commission were M. Lemaire for France, and Dr. Schmidt, German Consul at Cairo, for Germany. On the 9th June, 1885, Kitchener forwarded to Lord Rosebery, the Foreign Secretary, from Zanzibar the "special *Procès-verbal* containing the unanimous opinions of the delegates of Germany, France, and Great Britain as to the Maritime Littoral and Continental Possessions of His Highness the Sultan of Zanzibar". Kitchener returned to England after the conclusion of his work on the Boundary Commission, and in September of the same year received a communication from Lord Iddesleigh, stating that "Her Majesty's Government recognize the zeal and ability with which your share in the labours of the Zanzibar Commission has been conducted, and are convinced that the result of your exertions has been to place much valuable information at their disposal".

The "delimitation" of the territories of Bargash ibn Said, Sultan of Zanzibar, was followed by the founding of the German East Africa Company in March, 1887, and of the British East Africa Association in May of the same year. The narrow strips of maritime territory which the Boundary Commission had assigned to the Sultan were rapidly absorbed by purchase or lease by the two Great Powers. In 1890 the sultanate was proclaimed a British Protectorate in accordance with conventions between Great Britain, Germany, and France, by which, in exchange for the Protectorate of Zanzibar, Great Britain ceded the Island of Heligoland to Germany, and all claims in Madagascar to France. Heligoland was exchanged for Zanzibar!

In the meantime Madhism had spread from the Nile at a point about 100 miles above Khartoum, westward to Kordofan, Dar Nuba, and Darfertit (vast districts connected with the Nile by caravan routes across the desert), and eastward

among the headwaters of the Blue Nile on the Abyssinian frontier. El Obeid on the west and Sennar on the east were the chief places of these two districts of the Mahdi's "empire". By the end of 1885 the whole course of the Nile from Gondokoro in the Equatorial Province down to Ginnis, towards the frontier of Egypt, had come under the Mahdi's rule. In the west the Mahdi country now extended far beyond El Obeid into the interior at Darfur, and in the east it had reached the Red Sea coast for a hundred miles on both sides of Suakin. This immense extent of country was worthy of the name of Empire, for it measured not less than 1100 miles from south to north, and about the same in its widest part from east to west.

By the end of 1887 the Mahdist rule had crept down the Nile to Wady Halfa, the very gate of Egypt, and in all the territories thus absorbed by it there was only one town which could boast of an Egyptian garrison—Suakin, on the Red Sea. The tide of Mahdism had risen all round it, and even dashed against its very walls. It had already been the centre of important events—the disaster to Valentine Baker's Egyptians at Tokar, the annihilation of Mohammed Tewfik's Egyptian garrison at Sinkat, the victories of El Teb and Tamai, the fierce battle of Tofrik (M'Neil's zareba); and now, in 1886, the redoubtable Mahdist Emir Osman Digna, who had been at the head of the rebellion in the Suakin hinterland ever since the Mahdi's rise, was blockading Suakin, raiding the country up to the walls of the town, lifting cattle, and coercing the tribes who were standing aloof. Osman Digna's ancestors were Turks but had intermarried with the Hadendowa tribe, whose country lay between the Red Sea littoral at Suakin and Berber on the Nile, and Osman had assumed Hadendowa nationality. For years he had been a slave-dealer in Suakin, and when the Anglo-Egyptian convention as to the suppression of the slave-trade came into operation, and destroyed his business, he went

to Khartoum and Kordofan, threw in his lot with the Mahdi, and became an emir. Osman was the bearer of a proclamation from the Mahdi to "all his Beloved, the Believers in God and His Book", in which, after detailing the various miraculous signs—including a mole on his cheek—by which God and the Prophet had singled him out as the undoubted Mahdi, he went on:

"Are you afraid of the Turks and their strength? Are you not aware that all their armies must fall into my hands? Do you not know that all the infidels will be destroyed by us? . . . You are aware that I am descended from the family of the Prophet. I am begotten of the forehead of his father and mother. I am lineally descended from El Hussein (the Prophet's grandson). . . . I send you Sheikh Osman Digna of Suakin as your Emir in order to revive the true religion. On his arrival, join him and obey his orders, advance against the Turks and drive them out of your country. All God's people before you have quitted their country and children in order to conquer the land of the infidels. They did not mind death nor fatigue. The present time will now prove whether you are truly God's people. This you will be if you obey the orders of the Mahdi, but if you disobey them you must expect nothing but the sword, and your fate will be that of all who have disobeyed us."

It had needed only such an appeal to rouse the whole country from the Nile to the Suakin shore, and from that time onwards the British and Egyptian Governments had found Suakin and Osman Digna a thorn in the side. Colonel Chermside, General Hudson, Sir Charles Warren, and Major Watson had successively been sent to Suakin to govern the town and the Littoral as best they could, and to keep such tribes as had not already enrolled themselves under the black flag of the Khalifa (successor to the Mahdi) as friendly as possible. Among the "friendlies" was the Amarar tribe, whose country is to the south of Suakin, and who were actively in arms against Osman and the Mahdists. Tamai was the scene of fierce fighting between them. It had become evident that

something must be done to relieve the constant pressure upon Suakin, and in August, 1886, not long after his return from Zanzibar, Kitchener, now Lieutenant-Colonel, was appointed Governor-General of the Red Sea Littoral and Commandant of Suakin.

His first step, on taking up his post there, was to visit Tamai, which had recently been captured from the Mahdists by the friendly Amarar. They had taken a quantity of war material, seventeen guns, and a vast store of rifles and ammunition, besides slaying 200 and capturing 50 of the enemy. Kitchener reported that the Tamai position was a very strong one, with a square fort of masonry, having towers on which guns were mounted, protecting the entry. In the towers were chambers full of ammunition and stores. Near the fort was a battery, and the camp was large enough to hold 3000 men—altogether a dangerous neighbour for Suakin! The camp was destroyed, the fort blown up, and the leaders of the friendly Amarar received honours and medals from the Khedive. Kitchener, seizing the opportunity of further possible success after the capture of Tamai, demanded the surrender of Tokar (south of Suakin), but fear of Osman Digna prevented the loyal Arabs from coming over. The victors of Tamai, however, joined by the Ashraf tribe, occupied the El Teb district, and it was hoped they might repeat at Tokar their exploit at Tamai. The Mahdist emir, Mussa Fiki, advancing from Tokar, caused their retirement to Trinkitat, and Tokar was left unattacked. Osman Digna now journeyed to Omdurman to see the Khalifa and to ask for reinforcements to continue his attacks on Suakin; but, as he had failed to raise many of the tribes, the Khalifa regarded him with a cold eye, and, indeed, put him in prison for the murder of a Mussayeb sheikh of which he was accused by that tribe. Osman, however, than whom there was not a more cunning and slippery person in the whole Soudan,

except the Khalifa himself, soon regained his liberty, and even obtained a few of the Khalifa's warriors. This did not prevent the great tribe of Amarar from remaining loyal, and Kitchener, whose tact and experience in dealing with the Soudanese peoples was having great effect upon the Suakin district, received letters from one of the sheikhs at Tokar that Mahdism was on the wane there.

And now arose a great squabble between the Amarar and the Hadendowa tribes over the right of way of the Suakin-Berber road—the direct route from Suakin to the Nile. It had been a long-standing dispute, but Governor-General Kitchener had not considered it advisable to declare the road open, principally because the question of right had not been settled. The Amarar took it upon themselves to declare the road open; the Hadendowa threatened war against them. The Emir Fiki did his best to incite both parties, and the feud seemed about to break out more fiercely than ever, when two influential sheikhs stepped in, wrote to the Governor-General, and promised that they would maintain peace and carry out his wishes.

Kitchener now turned his attention to a place on the Red Sea Littoral, about 250 miles north of Suakin, known as Halaib, where a slave-dealing colony had long before established themselves and were doing a prosperous business. They had become so arrogant that they had fired on one of the boats of H.M.S. *Gannet*. The gunboat *Dolphin* had retaliated by burning the slave-dealers' village, but in the following month, June, 1887, the Governor-General himself went there with a small force, a company of the 10th Soudanese battalion and some irregulars, and the gunboats *Gannet* and *Falcon*. The slave-dealers were scattered, their sheikhs captured, and their trade broken up. They eventually emigrated to the opposite coast, where, presumably, being under Turkish rule, their slave-dealing throve again. Halaib, however, knew

them no more after Kitchener's visit; it was made a Government port, a police-post was established, and in the market-place, freed from the curse of the slave-dealer, legitimate trade sprang up and found an outlet.

In October of the same year, 1887, the Governor-General gave his sanction to a meeting of Hadendowa and Amarar sheikhs at Suakin, and approved of their decision to gather at Taroi, five miles south of Suakin, with a view to advancing on Tokar. Nothing came of it, for quarrels broke out again; the Amarar accused the Hadendowa of hanging back, the Hadendowa taunted the Amarar with being cowards, and, while the feud was in this preliminary stage, the Mahdist Baggara, horse and foot, fell on the Amarar and scattered them.

Osman, always watching Suakin as a cat watches a mouse, always longing for the day when he could call the town where he had once been so prosperous—and so notorious—his own, and drive out the hated Egyptian and infidel Christian governor, had been for some time at Kassala, near the Abyssinian frontier, about fifty miles east of the Atbara tributary of the Nile, midway between Khartoum and the coast. It was a convenient position, in touch with his master, the Khalifa, on the west, with the Suakin district on the north-east, and about 200 miles from both. Word was brought to him there that the garrison of Suakin was now very weak, having been reduced by the departure of two of the Egyptian regiments. Osman at once set out for Tokar with a force of 5000 men, and from there advanced to Handoub, about eleven miles from Suakin on the Berber road, and set up there his head-quarters. His raiding-parties and patrols went out far and wide, pillaging the very gardens beneath the walls of Suakin, and seeking recruits for the coming attack on the town. The garden thieves had more success than the recruiting-parties, for the local tribesmen were not very responsive, and one of the expeditions sent northwards into the Amarar country was almost annihilated.

A party of Amarar set out from Suakin, attacked the Mahdist post at Taroi, and captured 1200 head of cattle and 160 camels.

Osman's Holy War had not begun well, but he reassembled his men and prepared to take vengeance first upon the Amarar. In January, 1888, he advanced against them and defeated them near Dara, a place on the coast 50 miles north of Suakin. Governor-General Kitchener, hearing of this expedition, thought that the moment was favourable for an attack on Osman's camp at Handoub, which might even lead to his capture. For years everyone who had ruled at Suakin had tried to catch Osman. Permission was received from Cairo to make the attempt with the aid of the native irregulars and police and friendly tribes. Kitchener's little army numbered about 500, and although it was led by himself, and he had four European officers with him (Lieutenant Prinsep, A.D.C.; Captain T. E. Hickman, second in command; Lieutenant M'Murdo; and Surgeon-Major Galbraith), not many men would have cared to take out such a force against the warriors of the Khalifa under the Emir Osman. But before dawn on the 17th January, 1888, it issued from the west gate of Suakin, followed the old track of the railway of 1885 towards Handoub, and at four o'clock halted to await sunrise. The infantry of the force, consisting of Amarar, Bashi Bazouks, native police, and half-breeds, then advanced rapidly upon the enemy's camp. Among them were some Soudanese deserters from Osman's garrison at Kassala, and to them, owing to their knowledge of the camp, the actual capture of Osman was entrusted. The mounted troops remained at the halting-place in support.

Marching swiftly and silently, as only Orientals can, through the bush, the foot-party under Mohammed Ahmed, chief of the police, burst suddenly upon the enemy while they were at prayer outside their zareba. They fled, abandoning

their arms, and were pursued by the irregulars through the camp. The Soudanese made for the village behind the zareba, where they knew Osman was to be found—and found he was, with his horse tethered near by. The horse was captured, but Osman, climbing on to a passing camel, escaped into the hills. The whole force, believing that the village was cleared of the enemy, followed the fugitives. But many of the huts were still occupied. The scattered Arabs rallied, and, joining those who came out of the huts, went round the hill on the north side of the camp, regained the camp in rear of their pursuers, recovered their arms and ammunition, and cut off their assailaints from their supporting body, the mounted men under the Governor-General himself.

While this confused fighting was going on in the enemy's camp the supporting force under Kitchener was moving up. When near enough to see that the scrimmage was serious he quickened pace, dismounted his men, and opened a heavy fire, which drove the enemy into the village. The Soudanese who had tried to catch Osman were concentrated on a small hill, and the irregulars were scattered about on the hills behind. Kitchener at once had the "Assembly" sounded; the Soudanese came running in in response to the bugle-call, the whole force advanced nearer, and a heavy fire was kept up on both sides. What appeared to be a turning movement by the enemy in the bush on Kitchener's right caused him to send off some men to prevent it, but it turned out to be a headlong flight of slaves, deserters, and prisoners in the direction of Suakin. Kitchener gave orders to cover their flight, and 160 of them got through. The friendlies and Bashi Bazouks were out of hand, and, instead of keeping together to attack the camp, were maintaining a desultory and futile fire on the enemy's extreme right, thus losing all chance of capturing the main position. And, unfortunately, just about the time when Kitchener had given the order to cover the flight of

the fugitives on his right flank, he was severely wounded by a bullet in the face. A retirement was ordered, and carried out slowly and in order by alternate detachments fighting rear-guard actions. The casualties were 10 men killed, 3 officers (including the Commander and Lieutenant M'Murdo) wounded, and 6 men missing. The enemy was believed to have lost at least 300 men. The bullet which had struck Kitchener went through the jaw into his neck, and there it lodged for months until finally it was extracted. Kitchener was invalided to Cairo two days after he was wounded, and the duties of Commandant at Suakin were taken over by Major Shakespear.

The failure to capture the camp and village at Handoub put heart into Osman Digna's men, and they soon began to threaten Suakin again. In March of the same year (1888) they established themselves within 2000 yards of the town in well-constructed trenches and deep, traversed rifle-pits, which defied the fire of the two town forts, the H redoubt and Shaata Fort. Major Shakespear tried to turn them out of this position with two companies of Egyptian troops and some mounted men—about 450 in all, with a detachment of Soudanese and some friendly Amarar in reserve. The attack was progressing favourably when a shell, fired by one of the gunboats in the harbour, unfortunately fell among the Amarar, who fled panic-stricken; the panic spread, and the whole force had to retire, covered by the fire from H redoubt. Osman's horsemen then promptly charged. Captain Tapp, of the 3rd Egyptian Regiment, who was in command of the right flank, and was the last to retire, was attacked by a spearman. Tapp opened fire on his antagonist with his revolver, the spearman threw his spear. Both fell dead.

Kitchener, when he heard of this fresh failure, although still suffering from his wound, went back from Cairo to Suakin, and at once began to throw up new fortifications round the town, completing and strengthening those he had

begun on his first arrival. It was well he did so. But for his foresight and skill—it must be remembered that he was an engineer officer — the town might have been taken by assault, as Khartoum had been, for before the end of March reinforcements arrived for Osman from Kassala, and he was stronger and in better positions around the town than he had ever been. Kitchener's new defensive works, however, caused much perturbation at Osman's head-quarters. Among the arrivals from Kassala was the Emir Abu Girgeh, one of the Mahdi's earliest adherents. He objected to playing second fiddle to Osman, who, on his side, pointed out that by the Khalifa's authority he was the supreme head of the eastern Soudan. Abu Girgeh and his faction maintained that it would be useless to attempt an attack on the fortifications of the town. Osman and his party wished to make the assault forthwith. It is evidence at once of the extraordinary character of Soudanese warfare and of the tact of Governor-General Kitchener that at this time there was quite an active conciliatory correspondence between him and Abu Girgeh. As Kitchener well knew from past experience and close familiarity with Arab nature, it needed but little to bring Osman and Abu Girgeh to blows.

Kitchener's unhealed wound necessitated his being again invalided, this time to England. He was succeeded at Suakin as Governor-General by Major Rundle. In June, 1888, Kitchener received his promotion as colonel, and the honour of appointment as aide-de-camp to the Queen. Her Majesty had long recognized the value of Kitchener's manifold services, and had fully appreciated his ability as soldier and administrator, realizing, no doubt, with her usual shrewdness of judgment, that he was a man with a great future. To the end of her days Kitchener retained her gracious favour and regard. In addition to these honours, Kitchener was now appointed Adjutant-General of the Egyptian army at Cairo, and in

September, 1888, his place as Governor-General at Suakin, held up to that time by Major Rundle, was taken by Lieutenant-Colonel Holled-Smith.

During all the rest of this year (1888), Osman Digna's power increased, and with it the peril of Suakin. The Khalifa had begun to see clearly that his proposed conquest of Egypt —an achievement never absent from his mind—could never be successfully undertaken as long as Suakin, on his flank, remained in the hands of Egypt and a Christian Governor. Indeed, among his notions of conquest was an attack on Egypt from that very flank threatened by Suakin, namely, through the country of the Bisharin tribe to Kosseir on the Red Sea, and thence, due west, only 100 miles across a strip of desert, to Keach on the Nile, from which place he would be only 300 miles, as the crow flies, from Cairo. Suakin, therefore, and Osman who coveted Suakin, held a large place in the scheming brain of the Khalifa. Thus it came about that, in September of 1888, another council of sheikhs was held at Handoub, and it was decided that Suakin should be closely besieged by the 5000 men now at Osman Digna's disposal. The enemy's lines were soon brought within 1000 yards of the town forts, and they even started to fire into the town from the ridge between the two water forts, "Shaata" and "Gemaizeh". Colonel Holled-Smith, seeing that at any time the town might be assaulted, telegraphed for reinforcements, and General Grenfell, who had held the position as Sirdar of the Egyptian army since April, 1885, insisted not only upon sending troops to Suakin but upon the necessity of an increased army for the general defence of Egypt. The 4th Egyptian battalion was sent to Suakin. Colonel Holled-Smith, who had the 3rd battalion, the 11th Soudanese, and mounted infantry with him there, made reconnaissances which were always strenuously resisted, and a reconnaissance made by the Sirdar himself, who came from Cairo for the purpose in November, proved to him

how imperative it was to drive the enemy from their trenches and free the town from the peril of bombardment and assault.

He reported to that effect on returning to Cairo, and then, at last, the Egyptian and British Governments took serious measures to avert disaster. More Soudanese battalions, the 2nd battalion of the King's Own Scottish Borderers, and 100 mounted infantry, were ordered to the besieged town, and when at the beginning of December, 1888, Sir Francis Grenfell and Colonel Kitchener arrived there, the force available for the defence amounted to 4000 Soudanese and Egyptians and 750 British troops. Colonel Kitchener and some Egyptian cavalry made a reconnaissance on the 9th, and were met by so strong a force of the enemy's horsemen that a squadron of the 20th Hussars was at once dispatched from Cairo to reinforce the cavalry of the Suakin army. With them came also half of the 1st Battalion of the Welsh regiment. By the 18th the whole force was assembled and everything was ready for the battle of liberation. In the harbour were the gunboats *Racer* and *Starling*. It was decided that a naval demonstration should be made at Mersa Kuwai, on the coast, six miles north of the town, a place within sight of Osman's camp at Handoub; that a naval brigade was to work a Nordenfeldt battery and a 64-pounder on the embankment which connected the water forts, and that the *Racer* was to fire from the harbour. Sir Francis Grenfell in his plan of attack directed that every available gun was to fire heavily on the trenches before the attack developed. At six in the morning of the 20th December the artillery opened fire; the troops marched out to the attack half an hour after. The mounted troops were under Colonel Barrow. Colonel Kitchener commanded the 1st Brigade, composed of the 9th, 10th, and 12th Soudanese battalions. The 2nd Brigade, under Colonel Holled-Smith, consisted of the 4th Egyptian and 11th Soudanese battalions. The King's Own Scottish Borderers and the 3rd Egyptians formed a unit behind the

water forts. The General took up his position in the Gemaizeh Fort. The British and Egyptian force then advanced straight upon the enemy's trenches, the 11th, one company of the 9th, and two of the 10th Soudanese in the first line; three companies of the 9th, two of the 10th, and two of the 12th Soudanese in the second line; the 4th Egyptian battalion in square followed. At 600 yards the Arabs opened fire, but the advance was continued quite steadily. Then, attacking in quick rushes, the trenches were captured at the bayonet's point. An attempted rally of the enemy was dispersed by the 11th Soudanese, whose battle-fury was so strong that they had broken up their own square and attacked in open formation. The enemy fled to Handoub, completely defeated, with a loss of 500 killed, including four emirs. Derir Mussa Digna, a cousin of Osman, was wounded and captured. The British and Egyptian loss was 6 killed and 2 officers and 44 men wounded.

In his official report on the battle, Sir Francis Grenfell says:

"The Soudanese troops of Colonel Kitchener's and Colonel Smith's brigades, led by English officers, amply justified my confidence in them. The Soudanese soldiers behaved not only with gallantry but steadiness; they advanced for 300 yards under fire without firing a shot, and even when the trenches were reached they did not entirely lose their formation. Led by British officers the Black Brigade will become a powerful engine; the black not only hates the Dervish, but despises him, and has not the slightest hesitation in attacking him even when in superior numbers. This confidence in themselves and in their British officers is of enormous value in savage warfare. Colonel Kitchener, C.M.G., R.E., A.D.C., led his brigade to the attack with coolness and gallantry, and well sustained his previous reputation."

This battle of Gemaizeh is a landmark in the history of modern Egypt, because of the revelation contained in it of the extraordinary development of the military qualities of the native

levies. This was probably a great surprise for Osman Digna and his master the Khalifa, but it came as a surprise also to the Egyptian and British Governments, and was a source of confidence for the future. Kitchener, who led his brigade with such "coolness and gallantry", saw before his eyes the result of the work in which, since 1882, he had taken so prominent a part. Who knows what visions of the future—the avenging of Gordon, the conquest of the Soudan—may have arisen in that far-seeing mind when he beheld the Soudanese advancing so steadily and running in with the bayonet so furiously at the Gemaizeh trenches?

The loyal tribes around Suakin were delighted at Osman's defeat, but when urged to take advantage of the victory, and drive the Dervishes out of the country, they said that they were still powerless to act independently. As for Osman Digna, when his emirs urged a retreat to Tokar, fearing an attack on Handoub, he said that no advance would be made, and when, a fortnight after the battle, Sir F. Grenfell left Suakin for Cairo, Osman was able to pose as a true prophet and thereby to put fresh heart into his followers.

Kitchener remained for a while at Suakin in command of the troops, and Colonel Holled-Smith resumed his functions as Governor-General. Within the year, however, the Khalifa, leaving the wily Osman to deal with Suakin and make the best of his chances there, had turned his eyes again to the coveted land of Egypt. It became evident in May, 1889, that a northward movement of the Mahdists was decided upon. The advanced posts of the Egyptians, under British officers, had hand-to-hand fights with the enemy, in all of which the native troops, thus led, acquitted themselves admirably. On one occasion the Egyptian troopers, led by Captain Hickman, seized the spears of their fallen foes and made such excellent use of them against the survivors that lancer troops were afterwards formed in the cavalry of the Egyptian army.

The Mahdist advance upon Egypt was under the famous Emir Abderrahman Wad Nejumi, famous because it was he who had destroyed the army of Hicks and taken Khartoum. He had been the Mahdi's right-hand man, and was so powerful that the Mahdi's successor, the Khalifa, was actually jealous of him, and had taunted him with not doing enough for the sacred cause. Now, having assembled an army which was entirely devoted to him, under picked chieftains, Nejumi was ready to descend upon the Promised Land. At Sarras, within sight of its frontier, Nejumi was joined by Abd el Halim with 1200 fighting-men. As the chiefs stood on a hill at Abu Sir, Abd el Halim, gazing northwards, pointed out the lines of Wady Halfa to Nejumi. With a deep curse Nejumi swore that before long the horse he was riding should be lodged in the commandant's stable.

It fell to Colonel Wodehouse and other British officers to offer such resistance to Nejumi's advance as was possible until reinforcements were sent from Cairo. On 1st July, 1889, Nejumi's army and camp-followers, a dense mass of warriors, women, children, horses, camels, and donkeys set forth upon their enterprise. Many a time in the thousands of years since the invading "Shepherd Kings" had burst upon the ancient land of Upper Egypt had such scenes been enacted. Possibly there was but little difference in appearance between their hosts and the tribes of Baggara, Jaalin, Shaggieh, Beni Hussein, and Battahin, under their 140 emirs, with 160 banners, who had listened with fierce delight to Nejumi's speech before setting out. It was a holy war, he said, and a holy cause; those who died in it would die martyrs, and all knew what joys awaited martyrs in Paradise. It was an enterprise of danger and difficulty which must end in the death of the faithful. Then, drawing his sword and holding it aloft, he added: "But I, for one, will not desist from the holy undertaking. The weak hearts among you—let them go back, disgraced before God

and His cause; those who think with me—let them remain and I will lead them if not to victory to the certain joys of Paradise."

On 1st July, 1889, Nejumi's army crossed the frontier. The Egyptian troops for the defence were being rapidly organized by Colonel Kitchener, and he concentrated at Toski a column consisting of artillery, one squadron of cavalry, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of Egyptian infantry, and the 11th Soudanese, who had come from Suakin to rejoin their old chief, having marched across the desert from Kosseir, on the Red Sea, to Luxor, 120 miles in five and a half days. A British column was also concentrated at Assuan. It was at Toski, on the east bank of the Nile, between the ancient temple of Abu Simbel and Korosko, that the battle was fought on the 3rd August, 1889, the Anglo-Egyptian army being under the supreme command of the Sirdar, Sir Francis Grenfell. Nejumi took up his position on four little hills, planted his banners along their summits, and, as he looked out upon Kitchener's reconnoitring cavalry, exclaimed: "We must all stand prepared to meet our Maker to-day!" Charging with spear and shield, with banners waving and the name of Allah on their lips, Nejumi's warriors went down in hundreds before the volleys of the Egyptians and Soudanese. One of his emirs, dashing past Nejumi himself, cried out that all was lost, and that he should save himself. Nejumi, wounded as he was, galloped down into the plain, not to fly but to rally his flying men. The victors swept through the Mahdist camp and captured many prisoners—men, women, and children—and masses of material—swords, spears, chain-armour, tents, and war-drums. In the distance a camel was seen, laden with what appeared to be a gun and escorted by forty men. They were called on to surrender. They at once charged; many were killed; the survivors returned to the camel which was now lying dead. The survivors were again summoned to

surrender; they charged again, and all were killed except one man, who caught a riderless horse and escaped. What was thought to be a gun was the dead body of Nejumi, and dead beside him lay his son of five years old.

In the contemporary account of the battle it is stated that "Colonel Kitchener, in command of the mounted troops led them in the brilliant charges which broke up the enemy's ranks", and Sir Francis Grenfell, in an official message said: "Kitchener commanded all mounted troops, Wodehouse infantry, Rundle artillery, Irwin and Beach English and Egyptian cavalry, Settle senior staff officer. To these officers I am greatly indebted for excellent service and assistance." It was as a leader of cavalry that Kitchener specially distinguished himself in this critical campaign on the Nile. He had reconnoitred the enemy's first position on the morning of the battle, and had drawn them on northwards, and then, by taking up successive positions, checked their advance and forced them to fight. On the day after the fight he again led a reconnaissance towards Abu Simbel.

This was the last active service upon which Kitchener was engaged for some years. He received the Companionship of the Order of the Bath for Toski, and from 1888 to 1892 was Adjutant-General of the Egyptian army; during which time, under Sir Francis Grenfell and himself, the military forces of Egypt were still further developed and trained—a matter of the highest importance to the country, for the policy of continuously decreasing the British army of occupation steadily went on, and far up the Nile, in spite of his defeats and disappointments, the Khalifa's thoughts remained steadily fixed on the conquest. The year after Toski he wrote to the Khedive: "In the name of God, the all merciful, &c. From the servant of his God, the Khalifa of the Mahdi, to Mohammed Tewfik Wali of Egypt", urging him to embrace Mahdism, "the only religion which God would accept", pro-

mising him pardon if he did so, and threatening him with the fate of the enemies of that Faith—"all who do not embrace it shall fall into our hands". The British Minister and the British Consul at Cairo, and Queen Victoria received similar letters. To the Khedive, the Minister, and the Consul the Khalifa also sent complete Mahdist costumes, namely, one robe, one set of beads, one pair of drawers, one belt, one grass cap, and one pair of shoes. "If you wish to inherit everlasting life," he wrote, "then wear this clothing. Refuse, and you must bear the consequences and fall into our hands."

In 1892 the Khedive Tewfik died and was succeeded by Abbas. In the same year Kitchener was appointed Sirdar of the Egyptian army in succession to Sir Francis Grenfell, not without some criticism; but Lord Cromer, who was the really ruling spirit in Egypt, well knew what manner of man he was choosing to be his colleague in shaping the destinies of the country; and it was Lord Cromer who carried the appointment through. He knew—none better—what the position of Sirdar meant in Egypt—that the Sirdar not only commanded the army, but that it was a recognized fact, recognized by the Egyptian Government and public, that he really did command it, and was master of the situation, having British officers under him; able to decide on what orders to give and to rely upon their being carried out in letter and in spirit; and above all "not obliged to trim his sails to every passing political breeze". Obviously Kitchener was the man for the place.

The 9th of April, 1892, was a great day for Egypt and the British Empire. Installed as Sirdar of the Egyptian army, wielding the immense and unrestricted military power which that position connotes, and supported by the great man who, with him, now controlled the destinies of Egypt—Evelyn Baring (Lord Cromer)—Kitchener had taken the first step towards the reconquest of the Soudan, "the derelict Soudan", as Lord Cromer called it—derelict not so much because the

cargo was valueless as because no hands were available to effect the salvage. They became available on that day of April in 1892. About this time Kitchener received an encouraging letter from Sir Samuel Baker, the famous explorer of Equatorial Africa—a prophetic letter.

"I feel now", he wrote, "that the task of regaining the Soudan will fall to yourself and by its success will sustain the good fortune which I trust will ever favour you through simple merit alone. . . . My opinion is very strong upon the necessity of quietly preparing for the effort beforehand, so that when the moment shall arrive the success may be accomplished without loss of time. In all our recent expeditions one notes a general absence of military science. You will have the opportunity of preparing for a blow and delivering it with undoubted result which will bring honour upon the force you command and to yourself."

With this letter Sir Samuel Baker sent Kitchener some "Notes on Military Routes towards Berber", which he thought might be of service when the day came. Kitchener replied to this with a letter of cordial thanks, in which he expressed the hope that it might some day fall to his lot to use the Notes and recover the country as suggested. He believed, he added, now that the religious mania of Mahdism was dying out, that the Slavery question remained the chief reason why the Soudanese did not drive out their oppressors. They dreaded the general freedom of slaves which would be bound to follow the reconquest of the country.

On the 7th January of that year in which Kitchener became Sirdar the Khedive Tewfik died. He was a loss to Egypt, for it was under him that Egypt made the first beginnings towards reform and prosperity. His merit is that he did not oppose the reforms which the administrators undertook when the country had passed into the control of the British Government. Tewfik was succeeded by Abbas, his son, a young man of eighteen. He was in Vienna at the time of his father's death, but arrived at Cairo nine days after. The impression which

he created at first was favourable, but when he had been but a month on the throne Lord Cromer wrote to Lord Salisbury: "I see that the young Khedive is going to be very *Egyptian*". And it was not long before the government of Egypt, the foundations of which had been laid with so much care by the British administrators, was shaken. For ten years the good relations between the Khedive and his ministers and the British officials, delicate and difficult though they were, had worked smoothly, and Tewfik while he reigned had helped to maintain them. Now, suddenly, the whole system was endangered by this youth without political experience, fresh from an Austrian college. Abbas at once showed himself to be "very Egyptian". He complained that Mustapha Fehmi, the Premier, was "too English", and, on the other hand, found his secretary, Rouiller, an Anglophobe Swiss, "a most excellent Egyptian". He did not conceal his admiration for his grandfather Ismail or his contempt for his father Tewfik. Within a year he dismissed Mustapha Fehmi, and severe measures had to be taken in view of this and other disquieting events. The garrison of Egypt, much too weak, was increased. Lord Rosebery, then Foreign Secretary in Mr. Gladstone's Government, in a State paper issued at this time, defined the attitude of the British Government in unmistakable words: "We must maintain the fabric of administration which has been constructed under our guidance".

For a year Abbas kept quiet. But in 1893, during a visit to Constantinople, he tried to enlist the sympathies of his suzerain, the Sultan, and appealed to him for deliverance from the British yoke. A deputation of Egyptian sheikhs also present (no doubt with the assistance and connivance of Abbas) at Constantinople at the same time thus petitioned the Commander of the Faithful: "We hereby implore you, O Khalif, to consider our position with the stranger, who, under specious pretexts, has established himself in our country and persists in

LORD CROMER

British Agent and Consul-General in Egypt,

1883-1907

MAJOR-GENERAL SIR PERCY GIROUARD

Who constructed the Soudan Military Railway
from Wady Halfa to the Atbara (1897-8)

From photographs by Elliott & Fry, Ltd.

encumbering our sacred soil with his abhorred presence after many fallacious promises to quit it". Both the Khedive and the sheikhs failed. The Sultan advised the Khedive to "resign himself to his fate and trust to time, keeping on good terms with the English". The shiekhs were not allowed even to come near the Imperial kiosk. One of them, an aged man (Lord Cromer tells the story), was asked why he had signed the petition. He smiled and answered: "It is all empty words. I often say to my camel or my horse, if in some trifling way he tries my patience, 'Curses on you! May Allah strike you dead, O son of a pig!' If I thought it would really happen I should be silent, but I know that the beast will remain unharmed. So, also, I know that the English will stay here whether I sign a petition or not. What does it matter then? I please our lord the Khedive, the English remain all the same and look after my interests, and everyone is happy all round."[1]

But in January, 1894, worse came. Abbas went up the Nile on a tour of inspection. With him was one of his favourites, Maher Pasha, the Egyptian War Minister, who had steadily worked to undermine the authority of the Sirdar Kitchener. The Sirdar was at Wady Halfa to receive the Khedive, and paraded the troops of the garrison. Nothing pleased the Austrian-bred young Egyptian. He indulged in open and childish criticism of the soldiers, insulted their British officers, and is reported to have observed that he could have made better troops out of the horse-boys of Cairo. Kitchener telegraphed to Lord Cromer the following report of the incident:—

"This afternoon (January 19) His Highness the Khedive on parade made various observations disparaging to the English commanding officers, and afterwards said to me that it was a disgrace, in his opinion, that the Egyptian army should be so inefficient. I immediately tendered my

[1] Lord Cromer's *Abbas II*, 1915.

resignation in respectful language. It has been evident to me and others ever since the Khedive arrived at the frontier that he has continually given expression to his dislike of almost all the English officers, and his language to-day has been the culminating point of a series of unjustified criticisms. I therefore felt unable to pass by His Highness's remarks reflecting on the Egyptian army without making a formal protest for their honour and credit. Thereupon the Khedive became very cordial and begged me repeatedly to withdraw my resignation. I told His Highness that if English officers were to be rebuked in this public manner their position in this country would become almost untenable, and that if this state of things continued I should be quite unable to obtain the services of competent officers in the Egyptian army. His Highness assured me that he had entire confidence in me and I gave him to understand that I would not persist in my resignation, though I did not absolutely withdraw it."

Lord Cromer at once reported the incident to Lord Rosebery, who replied that the Government could not permit the Khedive's apparently deliberate practice of insulting British officers to continue. If they did, the British nation would not. Maher Pasha, a bad adviser and cause of strife, must be removed, and the Khedive must issue an Order of the Day in commendation of British officers and the army. Failing this, "stringent measures would be considered". The Khedive yielded, Maher was removed from the War Office, a nominee of Kitchener's was put in his place, and to Kitchener the Khedive addressed a letter, which was published in the Official Journal, expressing his entire satisfaction with the condition of the army and his pleasure in congratulating the officers, Egyptian as well as British, who commanded it, and affirming his appreciation of the services rendered by the British officers to his army. Thus terminated what was known as the "Frontier Incident", one of many which eventually led to the downfall of Abbas and the incorporation of Egypt into the British Empire. Abbas had yet to learn the full value of his army, in which he had tried to sow dissension, and of its English

officers, whom he had insulted, and to drink to the dregs the bitter cup of humiliation when he saw the vast regions which they recovered for Egypt—and Egypt itself—pass away from his rule for ever.

In 1894, soon after the Frontier Incident, Kitchener was created a Knight Commander of St. Michael and St. George. In the same year his father, Lieutenant-Colonel Henry Horatio Kitchener, died at the Manor House, near Leicester, in his eighty-ninth year.

And now, at last, in 1895, ten years after its abandonment, the reconquest of the Soudan began to be a subject of thought and discussion in Egypt and in Britain—a sure sign that Egypt had become stronger and more prosperous. The battle of Toski, in 1889, had broken the power of the Dervishes to invade; a battle at Tokar, in 1891, in which Osman Digna's power in the Suakin district was shattered (he himself escaping as usual), had settled the frontiers; the Egyptian troops, Abbas to the contrary notwithstanding, had proved their fighting qualities and their discipline; the finances of the country, thanks to Lord Cromer, were in a healthier condition than they had ever been; material progress in every direction had been much more rapid than had been anticipated; and, finally, public opinion in England had realized that the national honour was involved in the question, seeing that the Soudan, while Egypt was under British influence, had been abandoned and allowed to fall into the hands of the murderers of Gordon.

Eleven years after that tragedy there arrived in Egypt, as one risen from the grave, a man who had been held in a sort of honourable slavery by the Mahdi and the Khalifa all that weary time—Rudolf Slatin, the Austrian, once colonel in the Intelligence Department of the Egyptian army, governor of Darfur, and, after his escape, Sir Rudolf Slatin. Slatin had saved his life by professing Mohammedanism, a step which,

as he said in a letter to Gordon besieged in Khartoum, "was made more easy for him because he had, perhaps unhappily, not received a strict religious education at home in Austria". When the Mahdi died in 1885 he was made a *mulazim* (one of the bodyguard) of the Khalifa Abdullah, and kept closely confined to Omdurman. On his arrival at Assuan after his perilous flight he was received with hearty welcome by the British officers, and on embarking on the steamer for Cairo was escorted by all of them while the band of the Soudanese battalion played the Austrian national hymn. At Cairo there were further demonstrations in his honour. The official report which Slatin made to his military superiors, and the astonishing details of his long residence at Omdurman, which now became generally known, helped to arouse public interest in Egypt and Britain in that "derelict land", that "sad Soudan" from which he had thus miraculously emerged.

Eventually, in March, 1896, the immediate cause being the disastrous defeat of the Italians by the Abyssinians at Adua, the Commissioners of the Debt granted half a million pounds from the General Reserve Fund to cover the expenses of a proposed expedition to Dongola (a financial transaction which involved squabbling for months with the French and Russian Commissioners, who had voted against the grant, and in which Lord Cromer the British Commissioner's tact and influence ultimately prevailed), and preparations were at once made for the advance. Its details were discussed by Lord Cromer with Kitchener, to whom the command of the force was left.

"A better choice", says Lord Cromer,[1] "could not have been made. Young, energetic, ardently and exclusively devoted to his profession, and, as the honourable scars on his face testified, experienced in Soudanese warfare, Sir Herbert Kitchener possessed all the qualities necessary to bring the campaign to a successful issue. Like many another military

[1] *Modern Egypt*, Vol. II, p. 86.

commander, the bonds which united him and his subordinates were those of stern discipline on the one side, and on the other the respect due to superior talent and the confidence felt in the resourcefulness of a strong and masterful spirit rather than the affectionate obedience yielded to the behests of a genial chief. . . . Sir Herbert Kitchener's main merit was that he left as little as possible to chance. A first-rate military administrator, every detail of the machine with which he had to work received adequate attention. Before any decisive movement was made each portion of the machine was adapted, so far as human foresight could provide, to perform its allotted task."

Confident of the quality of the troops which he had for years helped to train, Kitchener decided to employ mainly Egyptian soldiers in the expedition. The garrison of Suakin was replaced by troops from India, a British battalion was sent from Cairo to Wady Halfa, the railway between Wady Halfa and Sarras, round the Second Cataract, was continued southwards to Akasheh and thence to Kermeh at the foot of the Third Cataract, and within about 50 miles of Dongola, which is at the head of that cataract. South of Akasheh, at Firket, on the right bank of the river, a force of Dervishes 3500 in number had long been encamped, and they were the first object of attack. On the 6th June, 1896, the Egyptian army and its British officers began the campaign—a campaign which was to last for more than two years—by a night march upon the Dervish camp at Firket. Ten thousand Egyptians and Soudanese under Macdonald, Lewis, Hunter, Maxwell, Burn Murdoch, Wingate, and others, with Slatin as one of the Intelligence officers, divided into two columns, advanced by different routes in the dead of night, bivouacked at midnight, and then at moonrise crept silently on till daybreak, when, from behind a slight lift of the ground, the Dervish drum was heard. It was the call to morning prayer. The attacking columns, having been skilfully conducted through the black night to the converging point, burst upon the Dervishes,

swept their village from end to end with bayonet and rifle-fire, and, with a loss to themselves of only twenty killed, slew a thousand and captured five hundred of the enemy. The victory was complete, and the gallantry of the troops was such that Kitchener himself said of them they behaved excellently, and that the credit they received was nothing more than they deserved. "Their discipline", he said, "was perfect; there was not a single case of insubordination; and they were all eager to go on."

The three months after the battle of Firket were spent in incessant struggles against desert storms and river floods, against cholera, against excessive heat—three months during which from Sirdar to the humblest Soudanese black the army worked as one man to perfect the means of transport and to drag the gunboats which accompanied the force up the river and over the cataracts, until, finally, on 23rd September, 1896, Dongola was occupied without much resistance, the Dervishes scattering in panic at sight of the advancing troops and the gunboats. On 26th September the Egyptian outposts were fixed at Merowi, at the foot of the Fourth Cataract, the site of the ancient capital of Ethiopian dynasties of kings and the Ethiopian queens of the Candace dynasty. There, amid the ruins and pyramids which dated back 3000 years, Kitchener's sentries looked still farther southward towards the goal, distant as yet, but so much nearer now that the great Sirdar had set his hand to the work of reaching it. The first step towards the avenging of Gordon had been taken.

W. H.

MEDITERRANEAN SEA
EGYPT
and the
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN
SOUDAN
Scale, 1:20,000,000
English Miles
0 50 100 200 300
Railways
Alexandria
Rosetta
Damietta
Port Said
Rafa
El Arish
Suez Canal
Cairo
PYRAMIDS
Suez
Akaba
Sinai
Gulf of Akaba
TRIPOLI
Barani
Mersa Matruh
Oasis of Siwah
Fayum
Oasis of Behariah
Oasis of Farafrah
Libyan Desert
Oasis of Dakhla
Oasis of Kufra
EGYPT
Suez Canal
Dam
Sinai
ARABIA
RED SEA
MEMPHIS
ABYDOS
THEBES
Keneh
Kosseir
Luxor
Esneh
Edfu
Oasis of Kargeh
Kom Ombo
Assuan
1st Cataract
Great Dam
Medina
Mecca
Nile
Korosko
2nd. Cataract
Wady Halfa
Nubian Desert
3rd. Cataract
Kermeh
Abu Hamed
Dongola
4th Cataract
5th Cataract
Berber
Port Soudan
Suakin
6th. Cataract
Shendi
Atbara
Omdurman
Khartoum
Kassala
ERITREA
(Italian)
Massawa
Port Said
L. Menzala
B. of Tineh
Suez Canal
Katieh
Bir el Abd
Bs. Salhiya
El Kantara
El Jifar
Ismailia
Kassassin
L. Timsah
Toussoum
Kataib-el-Kheil
W. Tumilat
Tel-el-Kebir
Serapeum
Bir Murra
El-Himmao
Bitter Lakes
L. Geneffa
Shaluf
PILGRIM ROUTE
Pt. Ajrud
Suez
0 5 10 30 Miles
ANGLO-EGYPTIAN
SOUDAN
Kordofan
el Obeid
el Fasher
Darfur
Gedaref
Sennar
Blue Nile
Abiad
Roseires
L. Tana
Bahr-el-Arab
Cabak
(Fashoda)
Bahr-el-Ghazal
Sobat R.
Meshra-er-Rek
Bahr-el-Zaraf
Bahr-er-Jebel
Bor
Addis Abeba
ABYSSINIA
FRENCH EQUATORIAL AFRICA
Mbomu R.
Ubangi R.
BELGIAN CONGO
Lado
UGANDA PROTECTORATE

CHAPTER VI

The Atbara Battle and the Desert Railway

Egypt, the Nile, and the Desert Railway—Girouard's Work—Ruling the Steel Lines—Hunter's Raid on Abu Hamed—Kitchener's Improvised Telegraph Transport—Completion of Line from Wady Halfa to Abu Hamed—Rolling-stock—Gunboats—Railway Extension to the Atbara River—In Omdurman with the Khalifa—Mahmud summoned from Kordofan—The Sirdar seizes Berber—Reinforcement by a British Brigade—Concentration at Berber—Kassala taken over from the Italians—The River Atbara—Mahmud's Advance from Metammeh—His Interrupted Plan—Kitchener advances to Kenur—Colonel Broadwood's Reconnaissances of Mahmud—The Raid on Shendi—Hunter's Discovery of Mahmud's Dispositions and Zareba—The Sirdar's Decision—The Final Reconnaissance—Broadwood's Action—The Night March to Mahmud's Camp on the Atbara—The Plan of Mahmud's Stockade—The Atbara Battle—The Advance on the Thorn Hedge—Gatacre's Camerons—The Soudanese Rush—The Destruction of the Dervish Force—Mahmud's Capture—His Reply to the Sirdar—The Sirdar's Policy—The Soldiers' Cheers for Kitchener—The First Lesson.

EGYPT is the Nile; the welfare of the country depends on its waters. The safety of both was consolidated by a railway. Before the advance on the Soudan was begun there had been a long competition between Sir William Garstin, Inspector-General of Egyptian Irrigation, and Sir Herbert Kitchener, Sirdar of the Egyptian army, as to which scheme should take priority—the dam at Assuan, which was to fill the Egyptian treasury, or the costly expedition which was to establish prosperity and security. According to a story told by Mr. Winston Churchill, there was a moment when the dam had secured priority. Kitchener and Garstin used to visit Lord Cromer from time to time to urge their views, and one day Garstin met the Sirdar returning from his periodical interview, and asked the result of it. "I'm beat," said Kit-

chener; "you'll get your dam." But in the event it was Kitchener's desert railway which won, and Garstin's dam had to wait for it. When prosperity and security were assured to Egypt, Kitchener warmly seconded Garstin's irrigation schemes—the two were close allies, and Lord Kitchener's last dinner in England before his fateful journey in the *Hampshire* was with his old friend—but till the Khalifa was destroyed Kitchener had only one aim and thought, which was to destroy him. The means that were employed were those of overwhelming him by superior supplies and communications.

The problem of destroying the Khalifa was in its essentials a simple one. A force equal or superior in numbers must be brought within striking distance of the Dervishes and maintained there; and this force must be equipped with a great superiority of guns, rifles, and ammunition, and be kept supplied with them. Given this superiority in arms, and given also good leadership and disciplined soldiery, the new Egyptian army would be strong enough to bring about the collapse of the Khalifa's forces, however brave and fanatically inspired they might be. The problem, stated in these terms, is not very different from that which, many years later, was set the German Head-quarters Staff when they designed to break through the Russian forces on the Dunajec. They aimed at bringing an overwhelming supply of guns and ammunition against a foe far less well equipped in these essentials of warfare; and they were able to do it, in great measure, because of their superiority in railway communications. Their task was only in part accomplished, thanks to the leadership of the Russians and the fine fighting-material it had to lead; but the amount of success they had was owing to precisely those assets of organized communications and supplies which, though on so much smaller a scale, Kitchener strove to give his soldiers and generals. The Sirdar may be figured in this connection, not as one of the impetuous fighting generals of history or

romance, but as a businesslike strategist, who, having seen what the resources of the enemy were, and how and where the enemy should best be attacked, sat down to devise the means by which he could place his fighting columns in the best possible position to smash him, and then, having forgotten nothing and left nothing to chance, should await the result in confidence. "Kitchener's idea of a war is a big business," somebody said of him many years later. He ran the Soudan war as a business which was meant to pay, and there was no department of it of which he did not examine every detail, every fitting. In the department of the railway he would take off his coat and work in his shirt-sleeves.

From Cairo to Assuan (where Garstin's great dam is built) the Nile runs roughly parallel to the shore of the Red Sea. But a little higher up than Assuan, at Korosko, it begins to turn away to the west, and from Wady Halfa to Khartoum the course of the river forms a huge double loop, thus:

What the railway did for Kitchener and for the victory he won was to span that great upper loop of the Nile from Wady Halfa to Abu Hamed "by the desert route". The railway had other extensions. For example, from Wady Halfa it ran *along* the loop, through Kosheh and as far as

Kermeh on the way to Dongola. Furthermore, after it had cut across the loop to Abu Hamed it resumed the path by the river, the tow-path as it might be called, and went on by the side of the Nile to Berber and the Atbara camp. But its vital achievement was the span thrown across the desert.

While the province of Dongola was being subdued, the valiant Nile had carried most of the army's supplies on its back. Railway and canal and donkey had shared the work, but the Nile was the carrier-in-chief. As far as Assuan the rail ran with it. At Assuan was the First Cataract—a difficulty—but from Assuan to Wady Halfa is another long stretch of useful Nile. Then at Wady Halfa the Nile cataracts begin in earnest, and therefore a stretch of railway to run beside the river was wanted to lift the transport over the rough places till another smooth stretch of river was reached at Kermeh. This railway ran past Akasheh and Kosheh, on the bulge of that upper loop of the Nile. The continual difficulties in making this railway, the break-downs, the wash-outs, all belong to the previous story of the Dongola expedition. The new campaign presented an entirely new railway problem. There were three solutions to it—in fact four; but the fourth —which was to continue the existing railway all along the upper loop till it reached the beginning of the lower loop at Abu Hamed—was ruled out because it would take too long, and because the last half of it, from Korti or Merowi to Abu Hamed, was over very bad and broken ground. Of the other three plans the first was to run a line from Korti across the lower loop to a place rather higher up the Nile than Berber or Atbara—to Metammeh, in fact, through Abu Klea, the line followed by the desert column in 1884. The second was to build a railway from Suakin on the Red Sea to Berber. The third was to take the line from Wady Halfa to Abu Hamed.

That was the railway which the Sirdar decided to make. The line from Suakin to Berber would be too dear and too

dangerous, and so would that between Korti and Metammeh, for the Khalifa would have been in a strong position to raid either. The third plan was the only one left; that, too, was across a desert, though it could be protected against the Khalifa's raids more easily. Strategically it had everything to recommend it. Was it feasible? The Sirdar took expert advice. Engineers condemned the plan. Sir Evelyn Wood had once recommended the route, but other strategists condemned the idea of converting it into a railway route as ridiculous. There was a remarkable chorus of disapproval from eminent experts who had not been consulted. The Sirdar listened, reflected—and ordered the line to be begun at once.

It was to begin from Wady Halfa—the Crewe of the Soudan—and it was to be pushed out from there like a slow-moving piston-rod, across 230 miles of desert. The route had been reconnoitred; the track had now to be laid, and Lieutenant Percy Girouard, a Canadian engineer whose early training had included work on the Canadian Pacific, was entrusted by Kitchener with entire and unrestricted control. It was Girouard who drew up the specifications, who proportioned the material and rolling-stock to the carrying capacity of the line, who thought of everything and forgot nothing, from railway lamps to locomotives, from sleepers to water, from fish-plates to labour, from time to cost. Being one of the Sirdar's men he omitted nothing, and having been entrusted by the Sirdar with the work he was instructed by none—no, not even by the Sirdar. There is, indeed, a story that at some point in the construction of the line the Sirdar, who was never absent from it, offered an unsolicited opinion—to be met with Girouard's rejoinder: "Are you responsible for this job, sir, or am I?"—and walked away without another word. Girouard ordered all the material, set up new workshops at Wady Halfa, enlisted new men in a railway battalion and trained them, and went into the question of water. One of

the major problems of pushing the railway into the desert was that of watering it. The desert was little likely to supply water, and so the locomotives must carry enough for their own steam as well as enough for the small army which they were helping to carry, and which was laying down the line on which the locomotives were to run. The farther the line was pushed the more water would be wanted, till at last the trains would have to carry one-third water to two-thirds railway material. Long before the line was finished the trains on the Soudan Military Railway consisted chiefly of strings of water-tanks on wheels, each tank carrying 1500 gallons. This necessity was eased, and the completion of the line hastened, by the discovery of two wells on the way, one at about eighty miles from Wady Halfa, and the second fifty miles farther on. Steam pumps were supplied and water obtained in plenty at these two parts, and the discovery was hailed as an example of the Sirdar's luck. It was his idea to sink the wells—again in face of expert opinion, this time the opinion of the local Arabs, who might have been expected to know—but the railway would have got to Abu Hamed, wells or no wells, and they only helped, they did not remove the difficulties of supply. Other places where borings were made yielded no water.

Across the burning plain the two steel lines were ruled. In front of them they pushed the canvas town known as "Rail-head", a nomad community of 2500 inhabitants, with station, stores, canteen, and telegraph office. Of the population 2000 were artificers and platelayers, who rose at three in the morning to meet the incoming train which brought the material for their day's work. They all knew what they had to do—the railway sleepers were laid out, the rails were spiked to them, the big engine moved behind like a steam-roller (which in effect it was), and other gangs moved behind to make the way sound and firm. So each day the town moved on, sometimes as much as two miles a day, and on one great

day more than three. The scenery remained unchanged week in and week out—every day the sand and the heat and the outcropping rocks like heaps of burnt-out cinders—but the piston-rod was pushing the town nearer to the Dervishes.

At times a thrill of apprehension may have crossed somebody's mind: What if the Dervishes were to raid the line behind them, cut off the daily supply of water, and leave the town to perish of thirst in the desert! Probably the men at work had no time in which to allow their imagination thus to stray, but the risk was certainly present to the Sirdar's mind. He was never absent from the railway; it was the weapon with which he meant to conquer the desert, and he was unwearied in testing it, in satisfying himself that it was proceeding as fast as it could, without waste, without weaknesses.

By the 20th of July, 1897, the railway, which had begun officially with the New Year, but had only settled down to work in May, had made its first 130 miles. Abu Hamed was 100 miles away, and a Dervish force which might attack the railway was encamped there. So, at the end of July, Major-General Sir Archibald Hunter was sent out with a flying column from Merowi on the Nile to anticipate a raid of the Dervishes from Abu Hamed by raiding them. He was given a brigade of all arms—cavalry, a field-battery, six guns and four machine-guns, and an infantry brigade, under General Hector Macdonald, of Egyptians and Soudanese, chiefly Soudanese. General Hunter began his march of 133 miles along the loop of the Nile from Merowi to Abu Hamed on 29th of July. The brigade had to travel through appalling country, for at this part of the Nile the desert through which it runs is not sand but rock, with narrow tracks of stones. The flying column, marching by night, and marching once for thirteen hours at a stretch, got to Abu Hamed in less than nine days, in time to attack the Dervish post at dawn of 7th August, 1897.

LORD KITCHENER IN 1896

when, as Brigadier-General Sir H. H. Kitchener, he held the position of **Sirdar** of the Egyptian Army

From a photograph by Bassano

In the last thirty-six hours the brigade had marched thirty-six miles, and then, in the darkness before dawn, marched on to the assault. The village of Abu Hamed stretches its mud houses along the bank of the Nile for about a third of a mile—an awkward place to handle if the Dervishes had had any liking for house-to-house fighting. General Hunter's guns opened on it, but the infantry, advancing like a crescent on it, had to do the work. It was not easy, for the Dervishes held their fire, and only loosed off when the troops were within a hundred yards of the houses. Two British officers were killed, and a dozen men; but at the volley—and its cost—the Soudanese regiments leapt forward, rushed the entrenchment in front of the village, and in a few minutes were shooting and bayoneting every Dervish they found in the streets. By half-past seven Abu Hamed was cleared to the river-bank, the Dervish cavalry had got away, the Dervish emir, Mohammed ez-Lein, was captured. The railway could now get on. The Sirdar, confident in Hunter's ability, had already ordered the gunboats to move up another cataract, and the railway engineers to get ready.

The Sirdar had been kept in touch with Hunter's flying column by field-telegraph, and Mr. Winston Churchill, in *The River War*,[1] describes the quick resourcefulness with which he suggested a means of laying the wire. The competent officer in charge of field-telegraphs, when ordered to make the necessary arrangements, was for once at a loss; he had neither appliances for laying the wire to follow a swiftly marching column, nor transport animals to carry it. The Sirdar frowned. After a few minutes' reflection he told the officer to get some donkeys from the villagers. The next morning, when the harassed officer had collected enough villagers and enough donkeys, he again applied to Kitchener. Here was the transport, but where were the saddles from which the wire is

[1] *The River War*, by Winston Spencer Churchill. 2 vols. (Longmans, Green, 1898).

unwound to come from? The Sirdar came slowly to the spot where the telegraph plant was collected. The coils of wire lay on the ground, the villagers and the donkeys waited for instructions. Sir Herbert contemplated them for a long time sourly. Then he picked up a coil of wire, backed the smallest donkey towards it, and drew the coil up till it embraced the donkey's waist and hindquarters like a big bracelet. He then pulled out the loose end of the wire and smacked the donkey with his free hand. The intelligent animal moved off, and as it did so the wire began to unwind. The Sirdar, without a word, walked away; he had shown his subordinate a new way to lay a wire. That at any rate was the method by which the field-telegraph accompanied Hunter's flying column from Merowi to Abu Hamed.

The railway, now beginning to move on again, also had its telegraph wire laid in less unorthodox fashion by Lieutenant Manifold, R.E.; and it went with the line. By 3rd November, 1897, the goal was reached, the steel span had been stretched across the sands from Wady Halfa to Abu Hamed, and the Sirdar's first trip was made in sixteen hours, at about fifteen miles an hour. Not a striking pace, but before the line was laid the journey took ten days. Some months after, the record was beaten: Kitchener's engineering subalterns ran him over the line at thirty miles an hour. But a great deal of traffic had travelled over the desert bridge by then, and the railway advance, like others, had been consolidated. Wady Halfa, once the frontier fortress of Egypt, was now the foundry of the desert. Lathes, dynamos, steam hammers, hydraulic presses, furnaces, drills were set up; new locomotives were collected from the ends of the earth—some from home, some from the United States. Mr. Cecil Rhodes, to save time, let the Sirdar have five which had been intended for Rhodesia, and thus helped along the Cape to Cairo route from the northern end. But as the efficiency and material of the rail-

way grew, so did the demands on it. It had been thought that when the railway struck Abu Hamed, the Nile would be able to take up the work of transport.

It was in anticipation of this that the Sirdar, as usual disregarding gloomy predictions, had ordered the gunboats to make the Fourth Cataract, and ascend to the reach of the Nile which runs past Abu Hamed to Berber. Lieutenant the Hon. H. L. A. Hood[1] and Lieutenant David Beatty[2] were in command of the gunboats *El Teb* and *Tamai*. The *Tamai* was first to attempt the passage and was swept down the rapids. *El Teb* tried next, and capsized, Lieutenant Beatty and most of the crew being thrown overboard. These mishaps occurred through the clumsiness, or misdirection, of the villagers who were hauling on the ropes. But Kitchener had ordered the boats up, and his subordinates were not going to face him with this tale of failure. So another attempt was made by another passage, and a week later the *Metammeh* was hauled up the cataract safely, and was followed at intervals by the *Tamai*, the *Fateh Naser*, and *Zafir*, and by the end of the month the gunboat flotilla with other craft had reached Abu Hamed. But despite this success the problem was not solved, for as the river began its seasonal fall it became clear that at low Nile the waterway would not be good enough for transport. Cataracts or rapids began to make their appearance. It was clear that the railway would have to continue to bear the burden, and it became necessary to extend it in successive sections to Bashtinab, then to Abadia, and at last past Berber to the Atbara River. The railway extension furnished new problems, because the characteristics of the country changed, and the line had to be carried now alongside the river on cultivable land, now by the desert, and now across country which

[1] Afterwards Rear-Admiral Hood, who went down with the *Invincible* in the Battle of Jutland, 1916.

[2] Afterwards Admiral Sir David Beatty, commanding the Battle Cruiser Squadron in the same action.

knew such a thing as rain. The foundations and culverts of the line became heavier, the task of building the railway more trying. But it was done; and next year by the 3rd of July (1898) the whole railway from Wady Halfa to the Atbara was finished. The question of supply was then settled, and with it the fate of Dervish rule was sealed. In less than a week stores sufficient for three months were poured along the line; and it was now possible to send into the heart of the Soudan armies which were independent of the season of the year and the resources of the country; to supply them with abundant food and ammunition and every scientific appliance of war; to support their land action by a powerful flotilla of gunboats which held "the command of the Nile", and could at full Nile bombard its banks as far as Khartoum and farther. The railway had brought the weapons. But the railway, Kitchener's sword, was the greatest weapon of them all.

The causes which had kept the Dervishes quiescent during all this time, and had prevented them from making the only possible resistance to the iron wall which was closing on them —namely, that of attacking the communications of those who were urging it forward—were several. The news of the fall of Dongola had shaken the Khalifa's rule to the point of collapse. For several days there were no executions in Omdurman. Then the Khalifa, by a remarkable oratorical effort, rallied the waverers and outlined a form of campaign. At first he seems to have expected that the invading army would advance at once from Dongola, and began feverishly to make preparations to meet them, and, the wish being father to the thought, to receive them at Omdurman. He drew in his garrisons and emirs and concentrated there. He ordered in Mahmud, who commanded the "Army of the West" in Darfur and Kordofan. But when, for some undiscernible reason, the conquerors did not come on, the Khalifa's heart hardened. He began to evolve schemes to expel them. Kitchener, whose Intelligence

branch had been trained under himself, was not ignorant of these preparations or of what was in the Khalifa's mind, and he supplemented the reports of his spies by cavalry reconnaissances which brought in information not based on rumour. He strengthened the garrisons against surprise and went on with his preparations.

At the beginning of June, 1897 (when the railway line pushing on from Abu Hamed was half-way across the desert), Mahmud, with his 10,000 men, reached Omdurman, and begged to be allowed to go on and destroy the Sirdar. The Khalifa knew more than Mahmud about the power of the magazine rifle. But he listened, and, in order to satisfy or whet Mahmud's zeal, sent him to occupy Metammeh and overawe the wavering Jaalin tribe, who were suspected of being willing to revert to Egyptian rule now that it was in strong hands and long arms. The Jaalin leader, Abdalla-wad-Saad, was half inclined to revolt, half goaded into it. In the event, Mahmud with his army of 10,000 fell on the Jaalin at Metammeh. The Jaalin had plenty of bravery but little ammunition, and were outnumbered four or five to one. Mahmud wiped them out. The men and children were killed; the women were taken to the harems of Omdurman. A few fugitives escaped; they met a camel corps which Kitchener, informed too late by Abdalla of his plight, had sent to meet them.

This was a business that Mahmud and the Khalifa understood. The railway, stealthily creeping towards them, was an unappreciated menace. The raid by General Hunter on Abu Hamed was the first awakening. It was quickly followed by another blow. The emir commanding in Berber, when he heard of the fall of Abu Hamed, decided that his post was no place for him, and marched away south. General Hunter heard the rumour of his departure, and sent some friendly tribesmen to reconnoitre. These men pushed right

on to the town, spreading tales of the great army that was coming in their wake, and audaciously "occupied" Berber on the last day of August. They sent back word to General Hunter of what they had done, and sat down to wait for reinforcements.

The question which the Sirdar had now to answer was whether he should go on to Berber or not. The prize had been thrown at his head; was it prudent to take it? The railway was still in the desert; and though he could hold Abu Hamed, if he added Berber to his responsibilities he had to feed his forces there and feed them by a very poor line of communication. Moreover, Mahmud, with his unbeaten army, was only a little way away; and another leader, Osman Digna, was not far off with 2000 men whom he could add to Mahmud's 10,000. If the Sirdar's army went on to Berber it would have to fight Mahmud sooner or later, and fight him with no more than equal numbers—and the numbers on the Sirdar's side were Egyptians and Soudanese—not British troops except for its officers. Was he to take the risk, or was he to halt until time and the railway brought him certainty?

The Sirdar, backed by Lord Cromer, took the risk. In twenty-four hours he decided to have Berber. He sent General Hunter on with as many Soudanese as the gunboats could carry, and on 5th September the Egyptian flag was run up over yet another reconquered town of the Soudan. The gunboats on the full Nile went on farther south and shelled the retreating emir, driving him into the desert. The Sirdar himself came swiftly across the desert from Merowi with a small escort to see what was done, saw that it was good, and returned to Abu Hamed to hasten the preparations for the fight that was by so much the nearer. His decision was that of a master. Offence was the true defence, a maxim which the Khalifa had failed to realize. Had Mahmud's army been

allowed to march on Berber as soon as Abu Hamed had fallen to General Hunter he might have held up the Sirdar's force by compelling it either to fight before it was ready or to adopt a purely defensive attitude till the railway came up. But the Khalifa and Mahmud did nothing, which was exactly what Kitchener at that moment asked of them. They let the moment pass and he seized it, and the fact is not to be ascribed to the Sirdar's luck, but to the Sirdar's ability to gauge the minds of his adversaries. The immediate results of the occupation of Berber were the swift conversion of all the tribes between Berber and Suakin on the coast into allies, and the strengthening of the Khalifa's fatalistic and disastrous intention to await the enemy at Omdurman instead of sallying out to seek him. Meanwhile Mahmud remained at Metammeh in a position of expectant inactivity which was more dangerous to him than action would have been.

With the winter months of 1897–8 the Nile began to fall. Kitchener decided to leave his gunboats above the cataract which formed in the river with its falling waters, so that they might patrol the stream and keep an eye on Mahmud, who had now been reinforced by Osman Digna, another sagacious leader who had retired from a position of too great contiguity to the Sirdar's advancing battalions. Some of the most daring and—to the Dervishes—most exasperating exploits of the campaign were performed by these mosquito craft under the command of Captain Keppel and Lieutenants Hood and Beatty. Meanwhile the railway was coming on and on; every day meant the consolidation and strengthening of the Sirdar's position. He had made his move, and now, outwardly, could sit still.

All that he had to apprehend was that the Khalifa and Mahmud might change their minds and attack him. For this undesirable contingency he prepared. He was warned by his Intelligence Department that the Khalifa was in two

minds—one of which leant to an immediate fight and a march north to engage in it. He therefore ordered his army to concentrate on his advanced position at Berber, and telegraphed to Lord Cromer asking for a British brigade with which to stiffen his troops. Lord Cromer's response was immediate; and the War Office, galvanized into a rare activity, sent the forces at once at his request. Battalions of the Warwicks, Lincolns, and Cameron Highlanders (with the Seaforths in reserve) were formed into a brigade and sent from Cairo under the command of General W. F. Gatacre, a commander who came from India with the highest reputation gained in Chitral and elsewhere. His determination and energy, and, not less, the zeal with which he trained and exercised his brigade won for him the nickname of General Backacher from his soldiers.

Meanwhile the desert railway was, if the expression be permitted, straining every nerve to concentrate the forces on Berber. It had to carry soldiers, ammunition, supplies, horses, traders, and even newspaper correspondents—whom the Sirdar could well have spared, but whom he tolerated so long as they did not get in the way. He did not permit them to accompany reconnaissances. The railway had to bear also, since time was precious, the weight of garrisons from the river who travelled by it instead of by more devious paths, and all the miscellaneous equipment of a campaign without precedent. It did all these things at high pressure. Time was not so pressing as it seemed, for the great Dervish advance which the concentration was designed to counter did not, as a fact, take place for months to come. But that could not be foreseen, and the Sirdar took no risks. By the end of January, 1898, the railway had done all that was asked of it, and a powerful force, British, Soudanese, and Egyptian, was concentrated about Berber, along the river from Abu Hamed to the Atbara. The tranquillity which so unexpectedly de-

THE SIRDAR, SIR H. H. KITCHENER, AND HIS A.D.C.
BIMBASHI J. K. WATSON

From a sketch by W. T. Maud, published in the Graphic

scended on the fighting front was very welcome to the Sirdar. Not only was he relieved of any anxiety lest he should have taken too daring a step forward, and should be attacked before he was ready, but he was able to strengthen and to continue to strengthen his forces in the new position. In language which is familiar now, his adversaries had relinquished the initiative into his hands—and without a blow struck.

Two matters engaged attention in the months which followed, of which the first, and by far the more important from the military point of view, was the consolidation of the advanced position on the Atbara. A second was the taking over from the Italians of Kassala. Kassala, an important town about equidistant from Omdurman, Berber, Suakin, and Massawa, had been for ten years after 1885 an outpost of the Dervishes. The Dervishes in 1895 imprudently attacked the Europeans in the neighbouring post at Agardat, and an Italian force took swift and heavy vengeance, driving out the Dervishes with slaughter and occupying Kassala. But the next year (1896) Italy's disasters in Abyssinia made the possession of Kassala equally cumbersome and useless, and the Italian garrison was left in a condition of rather harassed defence. The Italian Government therefore offered to retrocede the place to Egypt. The offer was accepted, and the Sirdar was deputed to take over the gift-horse. He arrived at an understanding with General Caneva, who was in command, and, his presence being more urgently required on the Nile, deputed Colonel Parsons to take over Kassala Fort on Christmas Day. An imposing ceremonial was observed, and with a salute of twenty-one guns Kassala became Egyptian again.

Three days before that happened a brigade of four battalions, with guns, had been hurried to the part where the River Atbara joins the Nile, and Fort Atbara came into being. The Atbara, when the rains from the Abyssinian highlands

swell it, is a great river which adds volume to the Nile flood, but when the flood falls it is a bed of drying mud, with pools which steadily contract in the drought and afford narrowing quarters for crocodiles, turtles, and fish. The Atbara's scenery is very different from that of the Nile. The bank for the greater part of the year rises high above the water-level; grass grows on it, and thick belts of mimosa topped with turrets of palm. On either side of the river, far up from its junction with the Nile, is a wide belt of dense scrub—a term unmeaning to those who have not been in tropical countries, but implying a thick growth of trees and creepers, which, though not impassable, are much more difficult to find a way through than any wood of temperate climes. A tropical scrub is, in fact, very much what most people imagine a jungle to be. With the occupation of the confluence of the rivers the hour for the Dervishes had almost struck. Even then, if Mahmud had advanced he would have embarrassed the Sirdar. As late as mid-January, 1898, if the Khalifa had added the main army of Omdurman to Mahmud's "Army of the West", the Sirdar might have had to retire to prepared positions farther north. It is said that Mahmud begged permission to advance, and that the Khalifa refused to countenance it till it was too late. At any rate, by the end of January the hour had passed. Kitchener was not only ready but anxious for the Dervish leader to come on. When Mahmud at last acted on the long-awaited order from the Khalifa the whole situation was changed. The railway had reached Geneinetti; Atbara fort had grown to Atbara camp, an entrenchment which no Dervish army could take.

But if Mahmud was aware of the changed circumstances he was ignorant of their full import. During the second week of February he began a leisurely march northwards. At El Aliab some glimmering notion of what he was about to assail seems to have dawned upon him, and he called a council

of war, with Osman Digna as a counsellor, who was hated but could not be wholly disregarded. Osman Digna, with no taste for frontal attacks on modern entrenchments, urged the prudent course of attempting to cut the enemy's communications by a desert march which should bring the Dervish army behind, and north of, the Atbara position. Mahmud disliked the advice as much as the counsellor, but other emirs agreed with Osman Digna, so he took it and struck north-eastwards from the Nile into the desert towards the village of Hudi on the Atbara. Thence, by making a long detour in the desert, as if he were marching round the curved part of a D from the bottom to the top, he might strike the Nile again behind Berber. But he had reckoned without the Sirdar, and without the Sirdar's Intelligence branch and cavalry reconnaissances. Shortly after Mahmud had left Metammeh for Hudi, which was not a difficult place to reach, because it was not far from the confluence of the rivers, and so could be reached almost without leaving sight of the Nile, the Sirdar himself marched along the Atbara to Hudi to meet him. Therefore Mahmud must either attack the Sirdar at Hudi or march past Hudi with the Sirdar ready to spring on his flank.

Mahmud, electing for discretion, took a wider angle of march, and deflected his army to a point on the Atbara which was some twenty miles south of Hudi. But if he now intended to march from there to get behind the Sirdar he had to travel over the curve of a very much larger D. He would have an eighty-mile march at least in the desert instead of a forty to travel, and his enemy would be on the look-out for him to make it longer. He could not carry water enough for 12,000 men in his skins; there were not many wells, and he would not by any means be certain to find them available. Dakhula he could not therefore use as a jumping-off place for his plan. He had nothing to do but to go to earth, as some years later another antagonist of Kitchener did at Paardeberg.

Mahmud sank into entrenchments by the side of the Atbara, waiting for a blow the force of which he could not foresee.

These events, examined in detail, reveal 23rd January, 1898, as the date on which the Khalifa broke up his own camp at Kerreri and returned to fortify Omdurman, while giving permission to Mahmud to essay the stroke that the Khalifa dared not himself risk. It was not, however, till the middle of February that Mahmud began to cross to the east bank of the Nile, and not till the end of the month that he was established at Shendi. From Shendi he started with numbers estimated at 19,000, of whom 12,000 were fighting-men, or, as one says in speaking of a modern division—sabres. They carried a month's rations and ninety rounds of ammunition apiece. That last stated fact gives a clue to the nature of the warfare which was to follow. Ninety rounds of ammunition —less than a modern Lewis gun can fire in ten seconds! The Sirdar immediately ordered his army — all but the brigade advanced to the Atbara fort—to concentrate at Kenur. The cavalry and the Camel Corps were sent up the Nile and the Atbara to reconnoitre. A small thunderbolt fell on the trading community of Greeks and Levantines which had come in the wake of the army to Berber. Kitchener's intimation to them is so characteristic that it deserves to be reproduced.

"*March 14th*, 1898.

"His Excellency the Sirdar desires, and strongly recommends, that all merchants in Berber should remove themselves and their belongings to Geneinetti as soon as possible. He can guarantee no military protection."

The Levantines, after some reflection on the strange strategy that aims at beating the enemy rather than protecting trade, decided to send a deputation to the Sirdar. After further reflection they decided that the Sirdar's plans were probably not to be influenced, but, having been furnished with a few rifles, they decided, with great commercial courage, to stay

where they were, a "wait and see" policy, which, as things turned out, was justified. Meanwhile the concentration went on at Kenur; the Seaforth Highlanders were brought up by rail, and some of them part of the way by canal, to join Gatacre's British brigade, and for three days, from the 16th to the 19th of March, the whole force was figuratively standing to arms. Next day the gunboats reported that Mahmud was on the move, and the whole force therefore marched to anticipate him at Hudi. They went in a dust storm, but the distance was traversed in ten hours, and a zareba was put up before nightfall.

The force consisted of:

British Brigade: Major-General W. F. Gatacre.
1st Battalion Warwickshires.
" " Lincolns.
" " Seaforth Highlanders.
" " Cameron Highlanders.

Egyptian Infantry Division: Major-General Hunter.
1st Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel Maxwell.
8th Egyptians.
12th, 13th, 14th Soudanese.
2nd Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel Macdonald.
2nd Egyptians.
9th, 10th, 11th Soudanese.
3rd Brigade: Lieutenant-Colonel Lewis.
3rd, 4th, 7th Egyptians.

Cavalry: Lieutenant-Colonel Broadwood.

Camel Corps: Major Tudway.

Artillery: Lieutenant-Colonel Long.
6.5-inch Howitzer.
Egyptian Horse Battery.
3 Egyptian Field Batteries.
British Maxim Battery.

If Mahmud had been slow in starting he now displayed a remarkable mobility. His force, the whole 19,000, men,

women, children, and animals, got across the forty miles of waterless country between El Aliab and Nakheila, from the Nile to the Atbara in the angle between the rivers, in one day. It was the Sirdar's plan to keep them there, and to keep them from moving down the Atbara. He therefore marched his force on five miles along the Atbara towards Mahmud—who now perceived that the D had been made too big for him, and that the projected outflanking desert march could never be attempted.

Colonel Broadwood was sent forward with the cavalry to ascertain the exact whereabouts of Mahmud's camping-ground. Scouting was difficult and dangerous in the thick bush of the Atbara. The Egyptian cavalry were not above criticism for this work. They had courage, and the campaign was again to prove it, but in reconnaissance work they wanted smartness and intelligence. A light quick-witted scout cannot be bred out of centuries of drudgery and slavery. But, considering the quantity and quality of the material, Broadwood and his officers did wonders, sticking to their task with inexhaustible patience. If the cavalry were slow to locate Mahmud's entrenchments, they were wholly successful in keeping his Baggara horsemen from coming near the British camp, and the success was due to the fact that they were always willing, under British leadership, to fight. Had Mahmud's horsemen not been kept at a distance they could easily have crept through the thick bush and sniped the British camp night after night. They might even have got below it and cut up the convoys. They never did. Colonel Broadwood was helped a good deal by the Bisharin Arabs, irregulars who had formerly inhabited the bush by the Atbara, and who had their own scores to settle with the Khalifa and his lieutenant. Their chief, the Sheikh Ahmed, accompanied all the reconnaissances, and gave much valuable information. There was a continual stream of deserters, also, who were of doubtful use. Once

there came an undistinguished emir. They brought in stories of Mahmud's straits of hunger, but their stories were generally such as they believed their hearers wanted to hear, and were only approximations to the truth.

"Any day," wrote a war correspondent, "from dawn to dark, you might see half-clothed black men squatting before Colonel Wingate, Kitchener's Chief of the Intelligence Department. Some were fairly fat: some were bags of bones. But all stated with one consent that they were hungry, and, having received refreshments, felt that they could do no less than tell Colonel Wingate such tidings as he would like to hear."

There was no such thing as a town on the Atbara, though there were names on the map which did not mean very much. The native mind had no conception of distance, and, consequently, native information was not precise. On one day Captain D. Haig[1] reconnoitred the Atbara for eighteen miles as far as Manawi, without finding a trace of the enemy. The only thing that was certain was that Mahmud had entrenched himself somewhere in the four-mile scrub of mimosa and date-palm, half grass and creeper, and that it would be a heart-breaking task to send an army through this scrub to attack him. Meanwhile, the waiting British force sweltered in the moist heat of the Atbara at day, and shivered in the cold nights. A good many of the force had come up in haste with very little kit. An English officer, said one of them, was far worse off in the Atbara than any English tramp. When he got up in the morning he had nothing to shave with, and was lucky if he got a wash. The mess stores, perhaps one camel-load, were all eaten, and he shared the men's ration; his shirt was no longer clean; he dared hardly pull out his pocket-handkerchief; and he had to wash his one pair of socks. Feeling against Mahmud ran high!

[1] Afterwards Sir Douglas Haig, Commander-in-Chief of the Expeditionary Force in France, 1916.

The Sirdar's only course appeared to be to wait at Ras-el-Hudi till Mahmud came out. Hunger might bring him out, but as yet it had not. The more trustworthy of the deserters said that there was still a store of food, drawn possibly from the caches of grain which the Dervishes sowed widely in the desert, and though many had been dug up others no doubt remained. So the Sirdar, whose quick brain had thought of the way to make the native donkeys lay a field-telegraph, hit upon a subtly ingenious plan to draw Mahmud. At Shendi, Mahmud had left a sort of depot in which the wives of the emirs and the surplus stores had been deposited. The principal deposit was the women, the prides of the harems, and this treasure-house was protected only by a slender garrison of 700 men. If this could be raided it might infuriate the Arabs into action. The stroke was a bold one as well as a safe one, and it was based on Kitchener's unerring knowledge of the Arab mind. Commander Keppel with the three gunboats, *Zafir*, *Naseh*, and *Fateh*, two of them commanded by Beatty and Hood, took a force of the 15th Egyptians under Major Hickman, two field-guns, and about 150 of the Jaalin tribe, who were likely to find a task to their liking, up the Nile towards Shendi.

It had been intended to surprise the place at dawn, but the *Zafir*, with her usual luck, ran on a sand-bank, and the surprise was not a surprise. The flotilla were a day late, and the Arabs were prepared to fight. But they had no notion of the sort of fight it was. The gunboats protected the landing, and as soon as the guns were landed they strengthened the fire of the gunboats. Two shells were enough to disperse the Shendi garrison, who may have been merely the *Landsturm* of Mahmud's forces, and the Egyptians occupied Shendi. The plain was black with the baggage the Dervishes dropped—bundles of clothes, angarebs, chairs, war-drums, helmets, djibbahs, donkeys, horses—and women and children. Every

Dervish struck out for Omdurman as fast as his legs would carry him. The best-quality ladies, the emirs' wives, had been sent off at the first hint of danger on swift camels. But there was plenty of loot, and novel opportunity of vengeance, for the Jaalin. The Jaalin, it is said, begged permission of Colonel Hickman, in command of the Egyptian battalion, to pursue the fleeing Arab horsemen on donkeys! The Arabs who were on foot were killed by them to the number of 160. The 645 prisoners, mostly women, were brought back to the Atbara. At Fort Atbara was already an encampment of Soudanese ladies, wives of the black battalions, and it is said that the 600 odd captives had a tremendous reception on their arrival, and joined in it themselves quite unaffectedly. In due course they contracted new family ties with such of the black soldiers as were allowed to marry, and no doubt helped to cement the *entente cordiale* of the Soudan when all the fighting was over. From their point of view, matrimony with a regularly paid Soudanese soldier was a better investment than the uncertain status of union with a Baggara nomad.

But this raid, which would have stirred even a sheep to reprisals, did not bring Mahmud and Osman into the open. At last the Sirdar, divining Mahmud's state of doubt, and the debilitating effect of his hesitation, took the matter out of his hands. The Sirdar had the initiative: he kept it. He sent out Major-General Hunter on 30th March on a strong reconnaissance. With him went the cavalry, a horse battery, and Maxims, and behind him in support two battalions of infantry were moved south to Abadar, where they occupied a strong defensive position in case of surprises. Hunter took with him one of Mahmud's deserters as a guide, and his position in the forefront of the cavalry was one of which the danger was not wholly compensated by the dignity. After going south-east for four miles the Dervish outposts were met. They fell back and the cavalry followed for twelve miles more. At last the

guide began to show signs of agitation. He pointed towards the river and its thick belt of scrub. From among the bushes rose a clump of palms. A squadron rode forward and reported that there were 1500 men in the scrub. Major Mahon[1] rode closer in and reported trenches and palisades and other defences. It was clearly part of an enemy position, but it was necessary to find out more about it; so the artillery and Maxims blazed into it at 1000 yards. Even then the enemy declined to show themselves; and at last General Hunter, who was not the man to sight the enemy without having a satisfactory look at him, rode directly towards the position. With him went Colonel Broadwood, Captain Douglas Haig, and the Marquis of Tullibardine. As they rode on they perceived a long zareba in front of the trenches, and to it the ground gently sloped. The officers approached within 300 yards, General Hunter leading, and suddenly they perceived that the whole of the space within the zareba was packed with fighting-men. They retired without haste, but certainly without delay. General Hunter's intelligent curiosity had led him almost to look over the fence, and the only explanation of his escape without being fired on is the one which was offered afterwards by a prisoner—that Mahmud had given orders that no shot was to be fired till the faces of the enemy could be seen. His idea was that he was about to be attacked, and that his men should hold their fire till it would be most effective, and the literal interpretation of this order by his men was the reason that Hunter and Haig and Broadwood were left to fight another day—and another foe of very different calibre. The cavalry, having ascertained all that was necessary, and having precisely placed Mahmud's whereabouts, returned to camp at once. They reached Ras-el-Hudi before nightfall, followed at a distance by some objurgatory but prudent Baggara horsemen.

[1] Afterwards Sir Bryan Mahon, commanding the British force at Salonika, 1915–6.

For two days the camp at Ras-el-Hudi was buzzing with discussion of what Kitchener would do, or what he ought to do. Some thought that Kitchener's caution would lead him to wait for Mahmud to come out, as Mahmud was bound to do. But that was a mistake to which Kitchener's caution would never lead him. Having the initiative he would never lose it: safety was never an end to him, but only the means to an end. His mind had already been made up—"marble to sit still, and fire to smite"—he would destroy Mahmud now that the time was ripe. For several days the reconnaissances continued. One was sent up the left bank to see what Mahmud's position looked like from that side; and then, the camp and the Sirdar's whole force having been moved on to Abadar, so as to make the last spring shorter, a final reconnaissance was made on the 5th of April under Colonel Broadwood. With him went Colonel Maxwell, Colonel Long of the Artillery, General Hunter, who of course would never be left out of anything that promised adventure, and the sheikh of the Bisharin friendlies, who would always be in at the death.

Colonel Broadwood started at early morning and saw no sign of the enemy till within a mile of the zareba. The thick bush seemed to conceal no one; there was no sound or sign of life. Broadwood's squadron moved parallel to the zareba, and presently, materializing from the green scrub, a large force of Dervish horsemen appeared, and, though retiring, ingeniously tried to outflank the squadrons of the Egyptian Horse. Broadwood decided to try to disperse them before he moved any nearer to the zareba. But while he turned his attention to the cavalry in front of him, which were going to the southern end of the zareba, another body of enemy horsemen came out from the northern side with the evident intention of getting between him and his line of retreat. At the same moment the camp, hitherto so silent and so empty, suddenly began to swarm with men as with ants. Some Arab guns began a crude attempt at

shelling. But their shells were of the worst quality and usually burst without doing harm, or did not burst at all. They rendered Mahmud a disservice by exposing his gun positions. Meanwhile the two arms of Mahmud's cavalry, strong in numbers at any rate, strove, one from the north and the other from the south, to encircle the intruders.

Colonel Broadwood replied to their obvious manœuvre by bringing his guns into action. They made excellent practice; the artillery was throughout extremely good, and the Maxims were also near enough to the enemy to do considerable damage. Under the fire the southern half of the Dervish cavalry began to give way. The Egyptian cavalry followed them with a caution which proved to be far from misplaced, for suddenly from a shallow depression 2000 spearmen sprang to life between the pursuers and pursued. It was a well-thought-out ambuscade. The Maxims were immediately turned on them, and the field-artillery loosed off into the brown with case-shot. Under cover of this fire the Egyptian cavalry began to retire. The Dervish spearmen, undeterred by the guns, began to advance to follow them, and advanced in good order. They belonged to the flag of Ali Senusi. At the same time the tribesmen manning the trenches in the camp began to open fire, and the two wings of the cavalry, north and south, began extending into the plain with the intention of closing round the Egyptian squadron like the claws of a pair of pincers. Mahmud was not to be trifled with, and Colonel Broadwood, having done what he came to do, prepared to go. His path of retirement led through the gap towards the north-east between the two claws of the Dervish cavalry, as yet a wide opening, and far from being closed.

At nine o'clock Colonel Broadwood ordered the retirement —Maxims and artillery in the centre with three squadrons, Captain Baring with three squadrons on the left flank, Captains Le Gallais and Persse on the right flank. The Maxims

protected the retirement of the artillery; the artillery in its turn covered the retirement of the Maxims. The cavalry retired similarly by alternate wings. But the Dervish cavalry, encouraged by these signs of retreat, began to press their encircling movement, pressing forward especially in the left flank nearest to the desert and farthest from the river. Broadwood sent two squadrons to strengthen Baring, and this encouraged the Dervishes on the river-side to make a bold attempt to rush the guns. Broadwood anticipated them. He ordered his right wing under Persse and Le Gallais to turn and charge the advancing Dervishes' horse. Broadwood led, and the charge struck the Dervishes obliquely and broke clean through them. The Colonel himself rode at the Dervish emir, who turned and was shot down by an Egyptian trumpeter. The Sheikh of the Bisharin, who was with the staff, clove a man clean through the shoulder to the lower ribs. The river wing of Dervishes was broken.

Meanwhile the other desert wing attempted what the river wing had failed to do. It, too, rode for the guns. Captain Baring saw them advancing and rode with two squadrons at their encircling arm. He came on to them from the inner side of a concentric circle, scattering them and making their charge ineffective. But the collision struck the Egyptian squadron into confusion, which was remedied only by the resource of Persse and Le Gallais in dismounting their troopers and using them with their carbines as infantry to prevent the Dervishes from re-forming or returning. In both these charges the behaviour of the Egyptian troopers was excellent, and the effect of them was to open and to keep open the way out. The Dervish footmen continued a sharp rifle-fire and Captain Persse was wounded; but by eleven o'clock Colonel Broadwood's force was clear and soon had shaken off pursuit. It had a few wounded, and the desert march was a trying one for them, but they were back in camp

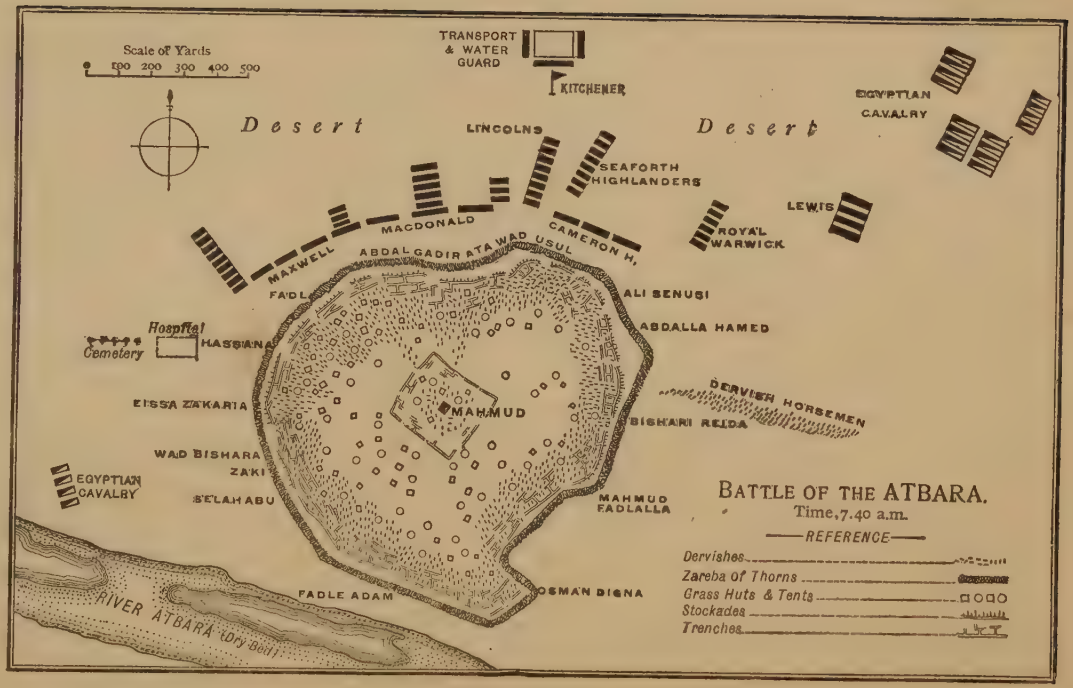
by one o'clock. They had brought back at trifling cost all the information the Sirdar wanted: the details of the enemy's defences and the distribution of his strength. But the action had done something more than that; it had vindicated the Egyptian cavalryman. It was known that he would stand fire; he had shown that he could meet his hereditary enemy with steel also. The cavalry mess was a hum of cheerfulness that night, and well it might be. The officers were proud of their men; the troopers walked with a swing that had not been there before. The dogged, uphill, back-breaking work which Major Kitchener, R.E., had begun with the Egyptian cavalrymen fifteen years before had come to bear fruit.

Next morning the Sirdar ordered the last step but one. The striking force moved on to Umdabieh, seven miles across the desert, and by that much nearer the enemy. A small cavalry escort took out some of the brigadiers to examine the line of advance; but they saw nothing of the enemy, he gave no sign of life. The men lay down at night expecting a night attack, but none came. Thursday was a day of final preparation. It was, according to the calendar, Holy Thursday. The Soudanese celebrated the event which was to take place on Good Friday with tomtoms. The Sirdar stopped all telegrams.

At six in the evening of Thursday the four infantry brigades moved out from the Umdabieh scrub into the desert. The mounted men waited till they were gone and followed them without break of march; whereas the infantry were to march to their destination and then lie down and wait to attack at dawn. There were twelve miles to walk in the desert darkness. A night march is always a difficult operation; it must be undertaken to gather all the advantages of beginning a fight at the earliest moment. The Sirdar had forgotten nothing. The line of advance had been carefully reconnoitred. The information as to Mahmud was exact: he was known to

be keeping to his defences. Many of the officers knew the intervening ground, but Captain Fitton, an officer of special knowledge, with trusty native guides, maintained the true direction. Careful patrolling prevented surprise. At nine the army halted for three hours—little sleep for many of them as may be imagined; at midnight all moved on again. The moon now rose. The army crawled by its light and was presently joined by its cavalry. At three in the morning, while the Dervishes still slept, except those of their sentries at the watch-fires, the Sirdar's army was in position to strike. In the stillness of the false dawn it was hardly possible to believe that two armies were face to face with one another. The Arabs knew by this time that the enemy was at hand, but they made no sign; nor made any movement when the sun rose behind the Sirdar's army and revealed to it the Dervish position—as also it showed the Dervishes the force which was to destroy them.

Mahmud's camp, shaped something like a reversed ⊐, was on the east, or rather the north-east, bank of the Atbara. The Atbara's river-bed was dry, but just behind the camp was one of the deep pools left in the river during the dry season. Round the whole of the camp ran for three miles a zareba of thorn bushes. The plan of the battle which was to follow was quite simple. It may be denoted by standing the reversed ⊐ on a ——, which denotes the river, and capping it with a ⌒, which denotes the British-Egyptian force, the whole arrangement standing thus: . The bracket on the top of Mahmud's camp first closed in on it, encircling it more to the left than to the right, and then was drawn or pushed right through the ⊐ till it reached the river thus: This brief sketch of the fight will make a more detailed description clearer.


Scale of Yards
100 200 300 400 500
Desert
Desert
TRANSPORT & WATER GUARD
KITCHENER
EGYPTIAN CAVALRY
LINCOLNS
SEAFORTH HIGHLANDERS
LEWIS
ROYAL WARWICK
CAMERON H.
MACDONALD
MAXWELL
ABDAL GADIR ATA WAD USUL
FADL
ALI SENUSI
ABDALLA HAMED
Hospital
Cemetery
HASSIAN
EISSA ZAKARIA
MAHMUD
DERVISH HORSEMEN
BISHARI REIDA
WAD BISHARA
ZAKI
EGYPTIAN CAVALRY
SELAH ABU
MAHMUD FADLALLA
FADLE ADAM
OSMAN DIGNA
RIVER ATBARA (Dry Bed)
BATTLE OF THE ATBARA.
Time, 7.40 a.m.
REFERENCE
Dervishes
Zareba of Thorns
Grass Huts & Tents
Stockades
Trenches

When the sun rose the British and Egyptian army lay along the low river hills or plateau in a long arc—Gatacre's British brigade of Lincolns, Seaforths, Camerons, and Warwicks on the left (east); Hector Macdonald's Egyptians in the centre of the line; and Maxwell's brigade curving round to the right (west). The whole crest of the ground was covered with our men, khaki British, black-jerseyed Egyptians and Soudanese, thousands strong. It was a sight which the followers of Mahmud must have found formidable and sinister. Behind the troops were the transport and the water, guarded by Lewis's brigade. The cavalry with Maxims formed up well to the rear of the left flank (Gatacre's side). When the four batteries jingled and clattered to their positions about a hundred yards in front of the line of battalions there was a pause as if the battle orchestra waited the Sirdar's baton to begin. Half a mile in front of the eyes of the assailants the long irregular line of thorn-bushes enclosed the Dervish defences. Low palisades and entrenchments led back to the river. Within the enclosure were hundreds of little straw huts and scattered bushes, and beyond the palms growing thinly here could be seen the dry bed of the Atbara and the big pool gleaming in the sun. A few mounds were heaped up as gun emplacements. In the middle of the ⊐ was a larger emplacement which was disclosed afterwards as Mahmud's citadel. But there was hardly a sign of life. Half a dozen little flags, white and pale-blue, yellow and chocolate, the standards of the emirs, fluttered; and here and there a white-clad figure dodged behind the parapets. There were morning fires sending up their smoke—the camp was certainly awake, but only the emirs' flags declared the presence of men ready to fight their last fight.

The imaginary baton fell, and from the orchestra spoke the thud of the first gun. A battery of Krupps in front of the Camerons opened fire. They were followed by all the

artillery instruments along the line, Maxims, Nordenfeldts, field-guns, and war rockets. The encampment was searched with shrapnel and common shell; fires sprang up here and there, and the din increased. At the first shot the few white figures in the camp disappeared; but a few horsemen stood for a while in the middle of the enclosure, as if they, too, like the British and Egyptian troops, enjoyed the spectacle. After about ten minutes of the bombardment something stirred in the enclosure; a cloud of dust sprang up, and hundreds of horsemen were seen scrambling to their saddles to dash through an opening out into the desert on the right of the zareba. That put them on the British left, where the Egyptian cavalry were, and the Egyptian cavalry with their Maxims went forward with eagerness to meet them. The Baggara horse, however, showed no spirit for an unequal combat; they danced uncertainly in the distance, but every time they showed a front the Maxims broke it up, and they never came near enough to sustain a charge.

The bombardment went on for an hour and twenty minutes, and—such is use on a field of battle—some of the Soudanese actually went to sleep while waiting for it to cease. But there was no rest within the zareba; the batteries searched it section by section with concentrated fire, and the straw huts began to blaze. The Arabs made no reply, bearing their ordeal stoically.

At last the gunners' work was done; the baton was imperiously raised for the second time. The whole line advanced. The plan for the attack was as simple as the position. A long deployed line, its cavalry going with it, was to advance steadily against the entrenchments, subduing by its continual fire that of the enemy. They were then to break through the zareba. Covered by their musketry, the supporting columns which followed the line of deployment were to enter the defences through the gaps, deploy inside,

and march through the enclosure with bayonet and rifle-fire. For the execution of the first part of this plan the Egyptian and Soudanese had made no special preparations, but General Gatacre had armed his Cameron Highlanders with thick raw-hide gloves and bill-hooks to pull the thorn hedge to pieces, as well as with blankets and sacks and even scaling-ladders. His brigade had a much deeper formation than that of the Egyptian-Soudanese brigades.

As the Sirdar's bugles sounded the advance the British officers dismounted and placed themselves at the head of their commands, and the whole mass of infantry, numbering 13,000 men, advanced steadily together—massed columns preceded by the long double line of the first deployment—bayonets flashing in the sunlight, the ensigns fluttering, the pipes of the Highlanders, the bands of the Soudanese, the drums and fifes of the English regiments playing them on. They went forward at the slow march at first, as level as though a ruler had been held across them, and in front of them their rifles and the guns spouted a cascade of fire. The Dervishes held their reply till the troops were within 300 yards; and then from behind the stockades a fusillade which grew in volume attested the fact that no bombardment can ever altogether silence men in entrenchments. Their fire became more effective, and was rendered more so by the conformation of the ground, which in front of the British brigade was seamed by a shallow depression which edged the Warwicks towards the Camerons, so that the precision of Gatacre's advance was deranged. For the last furlong the troops were clumped, and the Dervish fire, which was strengthened by explosive bullets, began to tell. But it did not tell long. There was no check to the advance, though the volley-firing was replaced by independent fire.

The British brigade followed Brigade Orders to the letter. The Soudanese brigades, when 100 yards from the thorn hedge, suddenly loosed themselves with a shout, and took

the intervening space at a run; Gatacre's men went on at a slow march right up to the thorn hedge, where the Camerons, literally obedient to orders, began deliberately to drag the thorn bushes away, so as to form a gap. General Gatacre, who had marched with his men, himself joined in the work, though Dervishes were firing at fifty-yards' range. But the thorn bush was nothing like the predicted obstacle. Before the way was cleared the brigade had rolled over it, burst through it, Seaforths, Lincolns, and Warwicks together—3000 men. Some of the Camerons went with them, to take toll with their bayonets for the loss they had suffered, but the bulk of the Highlanders continued dourly to fulfil orders, to pull down the gap for their fellows, and to take punishment without flinching or reprisal till their work was done. Then they followed the others to collect the bill from the Dervishes. Their losses at the stockade were severe. Captain Findlay and Major Urquhart were killed; Major Napier and Captain Baillie (Seaforths) were mortally wounded; and many other soldiers fell here in breaking the last barrier of the Dervish resistance.

For last barrier it was. At all points the brigades had burst through; the whole interior of the encampment was pitted and entrenched and irregularly seamed with holes. Shelter-pits for animals, trenches for camels; trenches for men, huts and hillocks and shelters, from which now sprang thousands of Dervishes, desperately striving to put up a fight. But the superior leading, numbers, and weapons of the troops against them bore down all resistance. The British brigade had struck the flank of the zareba, and thus took the whole of one face of the encampment in enfilade, sweeping it from end to end with their Lee-Metford magazines. The brigades could not deploy—there was not room—and it became a company leaders' fight; but yet the semblance of formation was preserved, and the whole force in one dense, ragged, but

irresistible line swept on through the camp which had been Mahmud's, till it came to the river.

With the British, even before them, went the blacks. They reached the zareba before Gatacre's men; their line formations were better adapted for the advance than Gatacre's more massed columns, and the thorn hedge mattered to them not at all. They blasted and tore their way through it. They lost more men than the Camerons, because the steady Scottish fire kept down the enemy's reply, but the blacks were out for revenge, and cared not for their lives so long as they had it. The battle of the Atbara put the Soudanese black and the Egyptian riflemen on a new pinnacle as fighting-men. One of the Soudanese battalions, which years before had lost its white officers in battle, was so determined not to suffer a similar loss again that it caught up its colonel in the charge, carried him through the zareba, and kept a cordon about him throughout the whole of the fight!

As the charging line of white and black went raking through the camp the Dervishes made a fight of it. Many disdained to run, and were shot and bayoneted where they stood; others charged sword or spear in hand; the bulk retired slowly, turning now and again to shoot. But piecemeal or in batches they were destroyed. In less than three-quarters of an hour the fight was over. The Sirdar's men came to the edge of the wood and to the bank of the river. The dry river-bed was full of Dervishes picking their way over the sand; and once again the rifles replaced the bayonets, and hundreds more of Mahmud's men were shot down. Lewis's half-brigade had been sent on to the left of the zareba, pressing the enemy in front of them, and now brought Maxims to bear on them. Nobody expected quarter; the Egyptians and Soudanese, with lifelong injuries to avenge, did not give it.

By half-past eight the whistles sounded the "Cease Fire"; the battle of the Atbara was over. Mahmud's army had

ceased to be. Mahmud himself had been found in an inner zareba, or stockade, seated on the carpeted floor with his weapons beside him, a beaten general waiting for death. It was wonderful that he did not at once find it, for his stockade had been rushed by the 11th Soudanese, and Mahmud's body-guard had poured a volley into a Soudanese company when they were close up. The body-guard was slain to a man; and when Mahmud was ignominiously dragged out, and recognized, he would have been slain too but for the intervention of a British officer. He was brought before the Sirdar. He stood up to him, man to man, a tall, pure-bred Arab, in the djibbah of the Mahdi, and awaited the death which he expected without blenching.

"Are you the man Mahmud?" asked the Sirdar.

"Yes, I am Mahmud, and I command as you do." He meant that he was the chief commander, and therefore entitled to consideration.

"Why have you come into my country to burn and kill?"

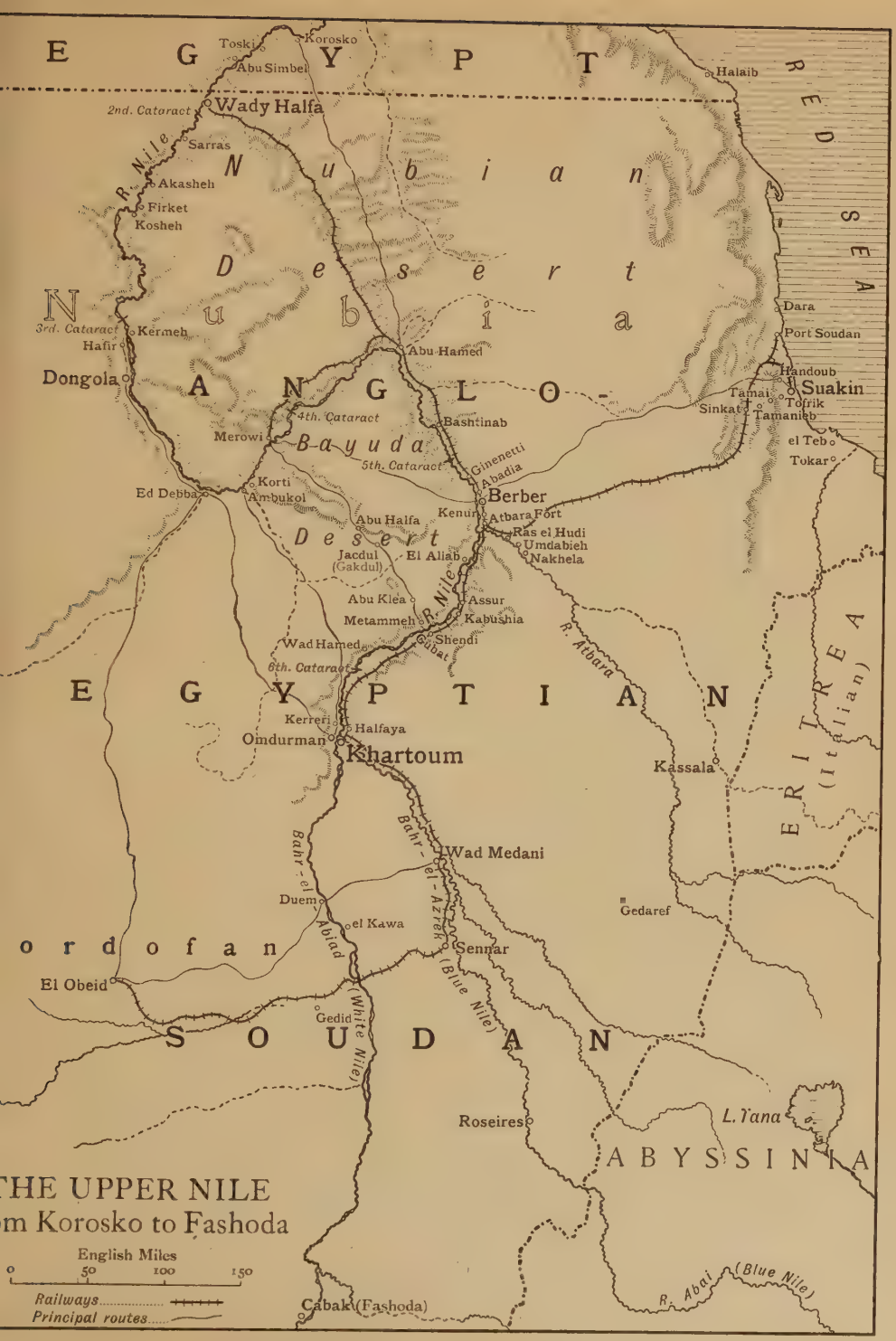
"I have to obey my orders, as you have to do," replied Mahmud unbendingly; and the Sirdar may have liked him better for his defiance, though he was not the sentimentalist to show it. He signed to take Mahmud away. He had no intention of diminishing the moral effect of victory by any misplaced leniency towards a captive who had never shown mercy, and who had the crime of the slaughter of the Jaalin to his account. Nor had the Sirdar any misapprehension of the verdict which the Soudan would pronounce if leniency were shown. He had a better use for Mahmud than to order his execution. When a few days later Berber was re-entered by the triumphing army, the Sirdar re-entered it as a Roman conqueror, with the conquered chieftain in fetters. The Sirdar, his staff, and his cavalry escort rode down the main street of Berber. The street and the mud walls were thronged with women and children, who chanted and yelled greetings to the

conquerors. But their wildest screams were kept for a man who walked alone, hands bound behind him, in a space behind the escort. It was the Emir Mahmud, beaten, powerless, a prisoner. In front of him was a flag inscribed in Arabic: "This is Mahmud, who said he would take Berber"; and in that biting barbaric sarcasm the Sirdar spoke to the barbaric Soudan's heart, and pronounced the epitaph on the Dervish chief who had dared to stand against him.

There were other scenes before that, and which in other aspects close the tale of the battle of the Atbara. When the "Cease Fire" sounded on Good Friday morning the battalions fell in, and the roll was called. While the regiments were reforming the Sirdar rode along the line. The British battalions, raising their helmets on their bayonets, suddenly cheered him, and cheered again, for they had no awe of him as the blacks and Egyptians had. To them he was only "Herbert", the leader who had given them victory, and who had written his name on those imperishable scrolls where the British soldier keeps his heroes. The Sirdar reined in his horse and stopped, surprised. His stern face changed, his iron reserve for a moment melted. In that moment was sealed the bond between him and his men, which, though invisible to those who know not the heart of the soldier, was stronger than steel, as strong as death.

Though the pursuit was ineffective because of the bush into which the fugitives plunged, and because the Baggara horse had ridden off early in the action, headed by Osman Digna, prudent but precipitate, the victory was complete. The number of the dead inside the zareba was little short of 3000: the Sirdar's aide-de-camp, Major Watson, counted 2600 before overpowering nausea at the sights and smells of the horrible place drove him out. Many more died in the scrub and in the river-bed. The riverine Arabs, friendly to us, struck in on the flank of the fugitives, and, led by Major

Benson, captured 600 of them, besides killing 350 more. Of the force of 12,000 fighting Arabs from Darfur which had been grouped under Mahmud's banner scarcely 4000 escaped. They were not allowed by the Khalifa to return to Omdurman because of the effect of the tidings they would spread. The Khalifa learnt the tale from Osman Digna and Wad Bishara. His army had been out-fought and out-generalled; the Sirdar's strategy had compelled the remnants to struggle across the desert to safety instead of retreating by the passage-way of the Nile; the Baggara horsemen, the pick of his men, had ignominiously run away; the despised Soudanese, the patient Egyptians, had proved the better men; even the scourged and oppressed tribes of the river had cut down the Khalifa's levies. It was the first lesson. E. S. G.



THE UPPER NILE
om Korosko to Fashoda

English Miles
0 50 100 150

Railways
Principal routes

CHAPTER VII

Gordon Avenged

Results Material and Moral of the Atbara Victory—The Army for the Omdurman Expedition—Atbara Camp—Wad Hamed the Advanced Base—Shabluka Gorge—The "Friendlies"—March from Wady-el-Abid in Fighting Formation—First Sight of the Dervishes near Kerreri—"Khartoum in Sight"—The Khalifa's Battle Array of 50,000 Men—Sirdar and Khalifa—The Halt—Shelling the Mahdi's Tomb—Position between Sorgham Ridge and Kerreri Hills—Possibilities of a Night Attack—The Morning of the Battle—Dervish Movements—The Khalifa's Plan of Battle—Frontal Attacks by the Dervishes—Rout of the White Flags—Collapse of First Dervish Attack—The Sirdar's Counter-attack—Task of the 21st Lancers—An Ambuscade—Charge of the 21st Lancers—Risks of the Sirdar's Advance—Echelon Movement and Macdonald's Brigade—Yakub's Attack on Macdonald—The Sirdar's Change of Front—Broadwood's Share in the Battle—The Delayed Green Flags—Their Attack Shattered by Macdonald's Soudanese and the Lincolns—Kitchener Orders the Advance—His Summary of the Battle—Flight of the Khalifa—Kitchener's Entry into Omdurman—The Sirdar's Fearlessness—A Description of Omdurman—Destruction of the Mahdi's Tomb—At Khartoum—The Gordon Memorial Service.

A VICTORY is not a final act, like the closing of a door; rather is it a door which opens to the passage of unmeasured events. To the Sirdar, the victory of the Atbara assured a free hand in carrying on the work to which he had given years of pertinacious toil; it stamped him as the man who has accomplished much and to whom much may be given; it placed him amid the hierarchy of successful British generals—the coming man. The campaign itself had changed also. It was no longer tentative; it was an enterprise which had taken hold, and the purpose of which would not be relinquished. It could never relapse into one of those brilliantly begun, tamely ended forays which had so igno-

miniously marked the history of Anglo-Egyptian relations. It would be pressed on now with the weight of British metal behind it, because the Sirdar had made it evident that his victory was no isolated success or happy stroke of fortune, but the result of a method and a plan which, if pursued, must mathematically yield final results. He had found a sure way.

There were other aspects in which the Atbara revealed new departures. The Soudanese soldier and the Egyptian recruit stood on a new pinnacle. The Soudanese was known now and for ever as a first-class fighting-man. After the way in which he had blasted a path through Mahmud's zareba, his English officers, wild with enthusiasm for him, compared him with the Gurkha for bravery and dash; but it was clear also that the Egyptian soldier, led by officers whom he trusted, had been inoculated with their fearlessness, and could be trusted too. The Egyptian cavalryman had proved himself a fighter—as a scout he would train on.

The army which Egypt now possessed was proved; it had been tried, and none could ever doubt its discipline, or staying power—or usefulness. Something is also to be said to the same effect of the white battalions. It was an article of faith that Camerons and Seaforths, Warwicks and Lincolns, would always do what was expected of them—still, the battle of the Atbara was the first time most of them had ever fired a shot except on a rifle-range. They had also been proved. Fighting-men, artillery, staff, transport, all these parts of the army machine had stood the test; it was evident that the machine was all that its engineer had believed of it, and hoped from it. Finally, the Atbara had swung the scale of Soudan opinion definitely to the conqueror's side. In Omdurman the Khalifa's tyranny was still absolute; but along the Nile, and in the riverine lands where his warrant did not run, the tribes turned to the victors as to the rising sun, giving their allegiance and their service. Some of the footmen who had fought against

the Sirdar at the Atbara, and who had found themselves deserted by the flying Baggara Dervishes, had joined the Sirdar's flag.

Yet, though the Atbara ruled off the past from the future as with a black line, the days went by with very little change, and the preparations went on. A few officers went home on leave, some to Constantinople, some to Brindisi and back for the sea voyage, some to San Stefano, some no farther than Cairo; and on the Atbara the supply and railway officers had stayed and sweated. At the beginning of August the military dispositions were not, on paper, very different from those of the end of April. The Sirdar's head-quarters had been moved to the Atbara in order that the vast operations of transport at that point might go on under his own eyes. Of the few infantry brigades which were to take part in the advance on the Khalifa, three were still in their summer quarters. The additional brigades had not yet arrived. When the Sirdar's Omdurman Expeditionary Force was constituted it consisted of two infantry divisions—one Egyptian, and one British—with cavalry and guns — and gunboats. The cavalry had one regiment of British (17th Lancers) and ten squadrons of Egyptian cavalry under their old commander. The artillery had been strengthened. It had one field-battery and two siege-guns, one howitzer battery of British artillery and one horse and four field-batteries of Egyptian artillery. There were Maxims attached — twenty in all — which seems an absurdly small number judged by modern standards. The fighting gunboats had been doubled in number, and there were the old *Tamai*, *Abu Klea*, *Metammeh*, and *El Teb—El Teb*, which had gone down the rapids at the Fourth Cataract and capsized, had been fished up, patched up, and renamed *Hafir*—as well as transport steamers and sailing-boats. There were eight companies of camel corps, the medical service, and last, but biggest, the transport corps.

Major General Gatacre commanded the British division. Of its two brigades Colonel Wauchope commanded that which General Gatacre had led on to the Atbara zareba. At the end of July the brigade was still grilling in summer quarters. Camerons and Seaforths at Darmali, Lincolns and Warwicks at Essikem. Lieutenant-Colonel F. R. Lowth had the Lincolns, Lieutenant-Colonel Forbes the Warwicks. The battalions had been a little thinned, but not much, by sickness. The second brigade had not yet come up from Egypt. Colonel Lyttelton was to command it. Its battalions were 1st Northumberland Fusiliers (Lieutenant-Colonel C. G. Money), 2nd Lancashire Fusiliers (Lieutenant-Colonel Collingwood), 2nd Rifle Brigade from Malta (Colonel Howard), and 1st Grenadier Guards (Colonel Hatton), from Gibraltar. The last two battalions were to be brought in to the country, railed up to the field, and railed out again, as a kind of military Cook's Tour—an arrangement which was naturally much criticized by the soldiers of the line regiments who had for months endured the heat and burden of the day. But since there was no time to acclimatize the new battalions that the Sirdar wanted, his judgment was sound in deciding to bring these men as fresh as he could to the scene of action, and, till "the day" arrived, to keep them as fit as possible.

The Egyptian Infantry Division, commanded as before by Major-General Hunter, now counted four brigades instead of three, Colonel Collinson, who had commanded the 13th Soudanese, being given the new Fourth Brigade. His command of the 13th Soudanese went to Lieutenant-Colonel Smith-Dorrien, who originally raised the regiment. The Fourth Brigade was entirely Egyptian, with Bimbashi Doran, Bashan Bey, Bunbury Bey, and Bimbashi Matchett for its commanding officers. The Egyptian troops were some at Berber, some at Atbara Camp, some at Merawi, or hauling boats over the Fourth Cataract, others cutting wood for the

river steamers, or pressing forward the work at new stations higher up stream. The whole force was organized and at work down to the last man.

Colonel Broadwood's nine squadrons of cavalry concentrated during the last week of July on the western bank, opposite Fort Atbara. The 21st Lancers (Colonel Martin) came up from Cairo. The total of the cavalry was to be 1500, but the British and Egyptian troops were to be separate commands.

Colonel Long was put in sole command of all the artillery, British and Egyptian, and two of the Egyptian batteries (Stewart's and Peake's) had been re-armed with 9-pounder Maxim-Nordenfeldts, so as to secure uniformity. The 32nd Field-battery (Williams'), with two 40-pounder siege-guns, and the 37th Field-battery, with 5-inch howitzers and lyddite shells, came from Cairo. They were all ready when the hour came for the final advance.

Two companies of camel corps were in the Atbara, timed to march on 2nd August. One company was coming over from Suakin. The other five, under Major Tudway, commanding the whole corps, were to start with a squadron of Egyptian cavalry from Merowi, and thence march by Sir Herbert Stewart's old route across the Baguda Desert to Metammeh.

The three new gunboats—*Melik*, *Sheikh*, and *Sultan*—carried two 12½-pounder Maxim-Nordenfeldt quick-firers fore and aft, and three Maxims. They were lightly armoured against bullets, and the screw was protected by being sunk in a spoon-shaped well a few feet forward of the stern. They were better fighting boats than the old *Fateh*, *Naser*, and *Zafir*, and though their shallow draught of 18 inches did not get them up the stream so fast as the stern-wheelers with their deeper build of 30-inch draught, they played a useful part in the final operations.

The full table of the forces was as follows:—

COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF: THE SIRDAR.

British Division: Major-General Gatacre.

1st Brigade: Brigadier-General Wauchope.
1st Battalion Royal Warwickshires.
" " Lincolns.
" " Cameron Highlanders.
" " Seaforth Highlanders.

2nd Brigade: Brigadier-General Lyttelton.
1st Battalion Northumberland Fusiliers.
" " Grenadier Guards.
2nd Battalion Lancashire Fusiliers.
" " Rifle Brigade.

Egyptian Division: Major-General Hunter.

1st Brigade: Colonel H. M'Donald.
2nd Brigade: Colonel Maxwell.
3rd Brigade: Colonel Lewis.
4th Brigade: Colonel Collinson.

Artillery: Colonel Long.

British { 32nd Field-battery.
37th Field-battery (5-inch howitzers).

Egyptian { Horse Battery (Krupp).
4 Field-batteries.

Machine Guns: 10 British, 10 Egyptian.

Mounted Forces.

21st Lancers: Colonel Martin.
Egyptian Cavalry: Colonel Broadwood.
Camel Corps: Major Tudway.

NILE FLOTILLA: COMMANDER KEPPEL.

Sultan, *Melik*, *Sheikh*, armoured screw gunboats.
Fateh, *Naser*, *Zafir*, armoured stern-wheel gunboats.
Tamai, *El Teb*, *Abu Klea*, *Metammeh*.
5 Steam transports.

Total strength: British, 8200; Egyptian, 17,600; 44 guns, 20 Maxims, as well as 36 guns, 24 Maxims on the boats.

From the disposition of these forces at the beginning of August it was evident that the campaign was still pausing before entering on its last stage. The army was only entering on the movements preparatory to concentration. The point selected for it was Wad Habashi, a dozen miles or so south of Shabluka, and only sixty miles from Omdurman. A great deal depended on the weather. The full flood of the rainy season would develop between mid-August and mid-September, and the thing to be hoped for was that the flood would not be a heavy one.

The railway now ran right to the end of the tongue of land which lies between the north side of the Atbara River and the east bank of the Nile. At its end was a huge depot. Mounds and plateaux of biscuit-boxes, of ammunition, and of stores of all kinds filled a space of many acres. When the troops had marched into the place after smashing Mahmud it was a fortified camp with one imposing house, belonging to Major Lewis of the transport. The house now seemed to have dwindled to a foreman's shed in the middle of a mud-walled station-yard. By the side of the Nile, where steamers had been a strange sight in April, the steamers now lay in rank; for the camp was now a port of departure—a half-way house on the way to Khartoum, though it was called the "advance base". The mud village had added to itself substantial buildings. The Sirdar had a good-sized house close to the river bank; the railway and transport officers had comfortable quarters. There were two large hospitals, and a long terrace where dwelt the foreign military attachés, heads of departments, Intelligence officers, and newspaper correspondents. Among these were Colonel Frank Rhodes—who, when the campaign was over, was the first man to reach London and to give material for illustrations of the Omdurman battle to one of the illustrated papers—Mr. Bennet Burleigh, Mr. George Steevens, and Mr. Lionel James. Of these only Mr. Lionel

James lived to see the beginning of the great war of 1914. The Sirdar, it may be added, was not an enthusiastic host where war correspondents were concerned, and one of those whom we have mentioned left it on record that correspondents made a point of keeping out of the Sirdar's way; but Colonel Rhodes and Mr. Bennet Burleigh were old acquaintances—and these the Sirdar never forgot. Another writer who accompanied this expedition, as well as the Atbara campaign which had preceded it, was Mr. Winston Churchill. In the final advance on Omdurman Mr. Churchill was attached to the 21st Lancers, and he subsequently wrote what is the standard book of reference on the campaign as a whole.

Between the railway and the river had grown up an actual street. Trade had followed the flag; but it was that of the Greek trader. The enterprise of the Greek trader, which demands special mention because it was of very great influence in the subsequent domestication of the waste Soudan, was already showing remarkable signs of its belief in the solidity of the Sirdar's advance. In this spot, where a year before any white man (unaccompanied by the Sirdar) would have had his throat cut, and where Arabs and goats shared the scrub together, it was now possible to buy groceries of all kinds, cigarettes, and fountain pens, and pay for them by a cheque on a London bank. The camp flew the Egyptian flag—white crescent and star in a red ground. But over the head-quarters of the British division was a small Union Jack. That was the flag the Greeks were following.

The Nile and the Atbara River stand on the map like the Greek capital letter Λ, the Nile being the left-hand leg. Atbara fort is at the apex. Metammeh is nearly at the bottom of the left foot, on the western bank of the Nile, with Shendi on the opposite bank. The principal places on this left leg before Metammeh is reached are Aliab, Magyria, and Khalli. But above Metammeh the Nile takes the form of a reaper's

hook, thus ☾. In the middle of the curved hook lay Wad Hamed, and just at the bottom of the hook the Sixth Cataract and Shabluka. If the simile of the reaper's hook can conveniently be kept in mind it will save frequent reference to the map.

From the Atbara camp to Wad Hamed the battalions began to move as fast as they got in. The staff, the British infantry, some of the cavalry, the guns, and the stores went south against the Nile flood in steamers and barges. The Egyptian division footed it by brigades. The horses of the batteries, the transport animals of the British division, the officers' chargers, and most of the war correspondents marched by the left bank of the Nile. It was a strange march to many of them. One of them noted the country and the bush by the river as sombre, but not without fascination, and full of game. But the villages were significant. The whole river bank was dotted with them: but all were empty and in ruins. The Mahdi, the Khalifa, and famine had killed nine-tenths of their population. On the way was Metammeh, with the plain before it on which Mahmud was encamped at the beginning of the year before his disastrous march to meet the Sirdar. It was covered with garbage and the skeletons of animals.

Wad Hamed, the camp of concentration, lay along the river bank for two miles, protected from attack from the east of the river now flowing turbid and strong and swift. On the western and southern sides were thorn-bushes staked to make a zareba: the north face was a deep canal or moat which had been dug. The British division, with its white tents, was farthest south. Then came the blanket shelters and neat grass huts of the Egyptian brigades. Over the Sirdar's big white tent, standing on a little mound, was the Egyptian flag; a grove of palm-trees marked here and there an officers' mess. Conveying as much meaning as anything else was the river quay, crowded with steamers, gunboats, barges, and

sailing-boats. They were shortly to go up stream past the rocky gorge of Shabluka and up the cataract on the last lap of the journey to Khartoum. But all this ordered camp, as regularly constituted and as peaceful-seeming as Bisley, was almost as evanescent as a summer bivouac. To-day it had come, next week or the week after it was gone, for it was moving on to Royan Island, beyond Shabluka and the cataract. By stream Royan Island was seven miles on; but in order to avoid the heights abutting on the Shabluka gorge the infantry had to make a detour, a two days' march. All the stores and transport were moved then south of Shabluka to the advanced base on Royan Island. Communications in the direct sense with the Atbara ceased, and the army, thus cut loose, launched itself on its objective of Omdurman, carrying with it three weeks' supplies. Two days' supplies went with the troops themselves, five days' supplies went in the regimental barges, fourteen days' supplies travelled in the army transport sailing-vessels. It was all organized, all tabulated, all cut and dried. The Sirdar was very sure of himself.

While the infantry divisions were marching round Shabluka to Royan, the steamers and gunboats ascended the stream and passed through the gorge, dragging the whole fleet of transport boats behind them. The northern end of this narrowed passage had been defended by five Dervish forts, and guns had been mounted in them with rude science. But the Khalifa had ordered the forts to be dismantled and the guns to be taken back to Khartoum. It was as well for the length of the Sirdar's campaign that he had done so, for the Shabluka gorge was a forbidding passage, and though it might have been turned, it would have been, even so, a difficult place to assault, and riflemen ensconced in the broken ground and sheltered in the hills might have made the enterprise a long and costly one. Happily the Khalifa and his Dervishes staked everything on the one great battle that was to be fought at

Omdurman—according to prophecy. Royan Island, on the other side of the gorge, was a camp more evanescent than the last. It was reached according to the Sirdar's clockwork plan, without delay or mishap, and for a few days the island was covered with white hospital tents and the river with a coppice of masts and sails rising above the jungle of palms on the banks.

The whole army broke camp at Royan on the 28th of August and took the first step away from its advanced base at four o'clock in the afternoon to march to Wady-el-Abid, six miles farther south. The Sirdar's army was to move along the west bank of the river, on the Omdurman side. A force of Arab irregulars was at the same time to march on the eastern bank. The Atbara victory had rallied to the Sirdar's flag every tribe that was not within reach of the Khalifa's vengeance, and some who had been. On the 26th of August some 2500 men, chiefly Jaalins, but also Bisharin Arabs, Hadendoa from Suakin, Shiaggia who had been friends of Gordon, were collected at Wad Hamed. They were under the eye of Major Stuart Wortley, who had with him Lieutenant C. M. A. Wood (Northumberland Fusiliers) as staff officer, and the task these officers accepted was no sinecure nor by any means devoid of danger.

From Royan the Sirdar's Anglo-Egyptian army moved forward on a broad front to the first bivouac at Wady-el-Abid. The preliminaries for this great advance had not run so smoothly as the pen travels over the paper in describing them. There had been many mishaps, the latest of which was the foundering of the gunboat *Zafir*, with Commander Keppel on board, while steaming from the Atbara to Wad Hamed. She sank near Metammeh, and Keppel had barely time to get ashore. The Sirdar heard this news while at Royan, and it must have reminded him of the disaster to his first gunboat years before, when the catastrophe drove him for a silent day to his own quarters. But now the Sirdar's calculations were not

to be upset by the loss of a gunboat, though the incident was extremely annoying. "He received the news calmly", wrote a friend, who evidently had thought it would be "very otherwise". But the Sirdar had made allowances for bad luck; even the persistent south wind which had blown against the sailing-boats during the concentration had neither upset his organization nor upset him. It must have aged many of his subordinates none the less. By way of compensation news was brought by the Sirdar's spies, of whom he had a very competent service, that the Khalifa had lost one of his steamers, the *Ismailia*, on the 17th of August (the *Zafir* was lost eleven days later). The Khalifa had proposed to mine the river, and the *Ismailia* was utilized to drop an improvised mine of a gunpowder-filled steam-boiler. The mine was to be exploded by an artless device consisting of a loaded revolver with a string to its trigger. The simplicity of the device was immediately demonstrated, for the revolver went off and the mine blew up the *Ismailia* while the apparatus was being lowered into the Nile.

There was a day's rest at Wady-el-Abid, and the army moved off again (30th August), thenceforth marching in fighting formation. The British division marched on the left, the Egyptian army on the right. All marched in line; but a flank brigade had its flanking battalion in column or in fours, as if the row of dots . . . . . which indicate the line formation were written perpendicularly instead of horizontally. There were six brigades of infantry stretched out in the row of dots . . . . . which, many times multiplied, indicate the broad front extending for several miles. The Egyptian battalions fluttered with the little flags of their company colours. The British battalions, less gay, yet carried their emblems: the Grenadiers had their ensign; the Seaforths and the other regiments had each their flag; and Divisional Headquarters took the Union Jack that had been torn by Dervish bullets at the Atbara. The cavalry and the Camel Corps went

forward as a screen, Broadwood's Egyptians doing most of the forward work, while the 21st Lancers hugged the Nile, where, at any rate, the scrub was thickest. One cavalry officer who saw the panorama of the march in vivid detail from a high place has described it—the Grand Army of the Nile marching towards its goal; the long row of great brown masses of infantry and artillery, with a fringe of cavalry dotting the plain for miles in front, with the Camel Corps stretching into the desert on the right, and the white gunboats stealing silently up the river on the left. Far in the rear the transport trailed till it was lost in the mirage; far in front, as the days went on, the enemy's patrols could be picked out with a field-glass. It had cut loose from its advanced base; a field-telegraph wire alone joined it to the world outside.

After passing Merreh the country became more open, and the hills of Kerreri began to define themselves, and a patrol reported that some white patches which had been discerned under their shadow were a body of Dervishes (31st August). The cavalry advanced towards them, but with no intention of precipitating an action till their strength was ascertained. The gunboat *Sheikh* planted some shrapnel among them, and the Dervishes retired. It did not seem likely that the Khalifa had any intention of meeting the Sirdar half-way at this defensive position. Still, it was necessary to find out, and therefore on 1st September a strong cavalry reconnaissance was pushed out. The 21st Lancers held to the river and the Egyptian squadrons curved away to the right. The gunboats went with them; in formation ready to take a strong hand. Mr. Winston Churchhill, who was with the reconnaissance, mentions the curious fact that the cavalry were accompanied by a flock of great vultures, perhaps a hundred in number; and he describes in *The River War*[1] the first glimpse of Omdurman which he had from the Kerreri Hills. The hills were deserted: the Dervish camp of

[1] *The River War*, by Winston Spencer Churchill, 1899. Two vols. (Longmans Green.)

the day before had disappeared; but a signaller who had gone up with Colonel Martin flag-wagged the words "Khartoum in sight". After a pause the cavalry went on, and, "turning the shoulder of the hill," writes Mr. Churchill, "I saw in the distance a yellow-brown pointed dome rising above the blurred horizon. It was the Mahdi's Tomb, standing in the very heart of Omdurman. From the high ground the field-glass disclosed rows and rows of mud houses, making a dark patch on the brown of the plain. To the left the river, steel-grey in the morning light, forked into two channels, and on the tongue of land between them the gleam of a white building showed among the trees. Then we knew that before us were the ruins of Khartoum and the confluence of the Blue and White Niles." Between the Kerreri Hills and Omdurman was a long low ridge standing in a wide rolling sandy plain. The plain was the arena. About it was a ring of other ridges, except on the river-side. The plain was empty.

The cavalry trotted on, and presently came to the ridge. Nothing to see except the continuing plain, with Omdurman beyond, and—one thing more.

"Four miles away on our right front", writes Mr. Churchill, "I perceived a long black line with white spots. It was the enemy. It seemed to us as we looked as if there might be 3000 men behind a high dense zareba of thorn-bushes. . . . Suddenly the whole black line which seemed to be the zareba began to move. It was made of men, not bushes. Behind it other masses and lines of men appeared; and while we watched, amazed by the wonder of the sight, the whole face of the slope on which they stood became black with swarming savages. Four miles from end to end, and, as it seemed, in five great divisions, this mighty army advanced—swiftly. The whole side of the hill seemed to move. Between the masses horsemen galloped continually; before them many patrols dotted the plain; above them waved hundreds of banners, and the sun, glinting on many thousand hostile spear-points, spread a sparkling cloud. It was perhaps the impression of a lifetime; nor do I expect ever again to see such an awe-inspiring or formidable sight."

This was the view of the Khalifa's army that was vouchsafed to the 21st Lancers. The Egyptian cavalry pushed on farther to the right, and even nearer to the enemy, who continued steadily to advance. From various sources a computation of the numbers and units of the Khalifa's great array can be arrived at. He had got together at Omdurman 60,000 men, and he had determined to fight the great battle on the sandy plain between his capital and the hills of Kerreri. He may have been influenced in this decision by the Mahdi's prophecy that here the Arab Armageddon was to be fought. But it is as reasonable to suppose that the Khalifa had some glimmering notions of the difficulties of supply which would confront him if he took a great army far away from its base, or frittered it away by sending detachments of it forward. Another Atbara might have overthrown an authority which had been shaken by the disaster to Mahmud, and his emirs were not a band of brothers. If he kept them all together on the Kerreri plain they must at any rate sink or swim together. This estimate of his policy is in some way confirmed by the fact that of the 60,000 men he concentrated for the battle, some 10 per cent deserted as the Sirdar drew swiftly near, between the 31st of August and the 1st of September, 1898. But there were still some 52,000 men to form the spectacle on which the reconnoitring cavalry gazed, for the Khalifa had added "every man of military age" from Omdurman to his command on that day.

The Khalifa's "regiments of the guard" were deployed in front of the centre. The centre and main face of his army consisted of 12,000 black riflemen and 13,000 black and Arab spearmen. These were all regular troops, and under the commands of Osman Sheik-ed-Din and Osman Azrek. Behind the centre was the Khalifa with 2000 picked men; and in the rear reserve was Yakub with the Black Flag and 13,000 spearmen and swordsmen. On the inside right wing was a brigade of 2000 men under Sherif, and on the outside right Osman Digna

occupied a strategic position which was nearest Omdurman and the best line of retreat. Ali Wad Helu, with 5000 warriors, had the left wing, stretching almost to the encircling hills.

For some time this great ordered mass advanced swiftly, the British and the Egyptian cavalry screen falling back before it. It was not visible to the Anglo-Egyptian army which had come 1300 miles or more to meet it, though only five miles—and now four—separated the Sirdar and the Khalifa, because the ridge cutting the plain divided them. But it seemed almost as if the Khalifa were about to precipitate an action, and the Sirdar mounted the ridge with some staff officers to get a better view. He surveyed them without excitement. If they chose to come on, so much the better, though the ground was not of his choosing. There was a good field of fire; they might as well come to-day as to-morrow. At any rate the Sirdar and his staff would lunch.

But before lunch was over the Dervish wave had stopped —with a roar—for as they halted their riflemen banged off their rifles in order to strike dismay to the souls of the enemy. The firing ran right along their front; and then the Khalifa's army lay down on the ground. No more was to be done that day. But if the land forces were to bivouac without engagement, matters had been stirring on the Nile. Before midday the gunboats had gone up to Omdurman shelling and silencing the Khalifa's Nile forts as they went. The embrasures were banged to pieces, the insufficient trenches cleared out by the Maxims, the tenacious gunners driven from smashed guns and battered emplacements into the streets of Omdurman. The wall of Omdurman was drilled with holes.

Major Stuart Wortley's irregulars were now found a job in which they could and did take a hand. This task was to attack the long, straggling village, or villages, on the east bank when, or after, the gunboats had shelled them. There were 3000 irregulars, and, in the circumstances, they ought to have

been useful. They proved to be, in a murderous fashion, but there was more than one incident of the fighting which showed the risks that Major Stuart Wortley and his subordinate, Lieutenant Wood, ran in leading this band of assassins. Some of them could not be got to attack. The Jaalin, however, who were the best part of the force, quickly redeemed the hesitation of the others, and in the attack on the houses cleared out the Dervish defenders by killing them all, and so settled some part of their blood feud. The village being cleared, the gunboats went still higher up the river and with the third shot smashed in the cupola of the Mahdi's tomb. They continued to shell it and to fire at other buildings in Omdurman in the hope of destroying the Khalifa's arsenal. This remained the chief event of the day. The troops stood to arms for some hours; the gunboats, having done their work, returned to protect the flanks, and the Sirdar's army bivouacked where it stood. The Dervish army lay for the night along the eastern slope of a wide depression in the plain.

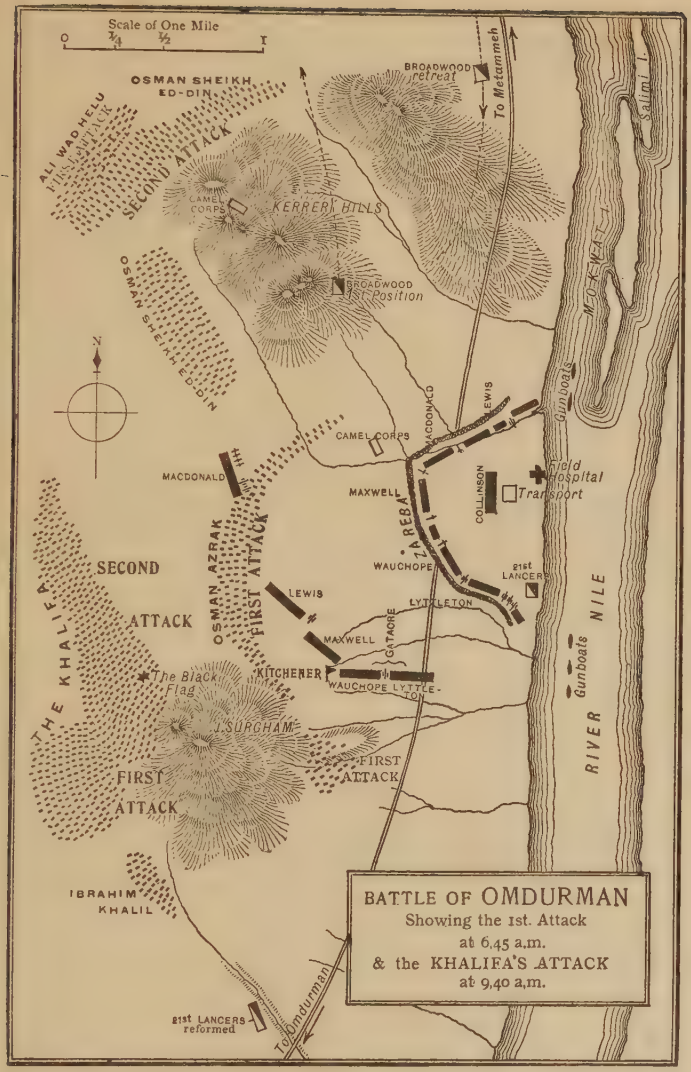
On the night of 1st–2nd September the Anglo-Egyptian army bivouacked in the village of Agaiga, a mile in front (south) of the Kerreri Hills. On its left front was the hill of Sorgham, shouldering down into the ridge which separated the two armies. It remained under arms all night, and at dawn every man was in his place. The line, bent into an arc, thus rested its two ends on the Nile. If an upright be placed on either side of the arc, thus , these uprights will represent the Sorgham ridge and the Kerreri Hills respectively; and the Khalifa's force may be figured as well to the left of the left-hand upright, and stretching, desertwards, far above it. During the night it may be imagined that nobody slept much in the British camp, and perhaps the Khalifa and his army were no less expectant. The gunboats directed their watchful search-lights continually on the Dervish lines to espy any movement, and, according to report, spread a thrill of fear

among men who had no fear of a living enemy. The apprehensions of the Sirdar's army were of a different kind. What if the Khalifa should risk a night attack? However well it might be met, the great weight of numbers of his army, their known courage, would inflict great losses on the Sirdar's force, whose superior equipment of weapons would lose much of its advantage in the darkness. It is fruitless to enquire what might have happened, but it may be pointed out that a night attack is of all military operations the one with the largest possibilities of error and disaster to those who make it, and that even had it been attempted the search-lights would have given warning of it. The Khalifa could not have manœuvred his masses in time to make a simultaneous attack over all the line; it seems most probable that he must have sent one part of them only to the assault, and if this had been blasted by the Anglo-Egyptian fire no subsequent attack could have reinforced it. The Sirdar, if he anticipated any such attack, faced it boldly. He formed his line in the long curve which has already been figured, resting on the river and enclosing a wide area of ground. The line was no more than two deep: he would thus secure a very long line of fire; and he waited.

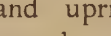
His belief that the enemy would not attack, founded on his deep knowledge of the Arab, was justified. The army woke on the morning of 2nd September with the enemy still on the other side of the ridge. Along the curve between the uprights, | ⌒ |, the formation, beginning on the left, ran as follows:—

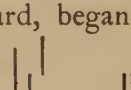
Left:
- Lyttelton's Brigade (British).
  (Rifles, Lancashire Fusiliers, Northumberland Fusiliers, Grenadier Guards.)
- Wauchope's Brigade (British).
  (Warwicks, Seaforths, Camerons, Lincolns.)
- Maxwell's Brigade.

Right:
- Macdonald's Brigade (Soudanese and Egyptians).
- Lewis's Brigade „ „
- Collinson's Brigade „ „


Scale of One Mile
0 ¼ ½ 1
OSMAN SHEIKH ED-DIN
ALI WAD HELU
SECOND ATTACK
CAMEL CORPS
KERRERI HILLS
BROADWOOD retreat
To Metammeh
Salim I.
BROADWOOD 1st Position
OSMAN SHEIKH ED-DIN
N
CAMEL CORPS
MACDONALD
MAXWELL
MACCOMO
LEWIS
Gunboats
MOGREAT I.
Field Hospital
Transport
COLLINSON
ZAREBA
OSMAN AZRAK
FIRST ATTACK
SECOND ATTACK
WAUCHOPE
21st LANCERS
LEWIS
LYTTLETON
GATACRE
MAXWELL
KITCHENER
The Black Flag
WAUCHOPE LYTTLETON
Gunboats
RIVER NILE
THE KHALIFA
J. SURGHAM
FIRST ATTACK
FIRST ATTACK
IBRAHIM KHALIL
To Omdurman
21st LANCERS reformed
BATTLE OF OMDURMAN
Showing the 1st. Attack
at 6.45 a.m.
& the KHALIFA'S ATTACK
at 9.40 a.m.

The heavy field-battery was on the extreme left, the other guns at intervals on the line.

The cavalry—British on the left, Egyptians moving from the right across the front—were out before dawn. The first troop, under Captain Baring, went on to Sorgham Hill, the left-hand upright,  , to see what the enemy were about to do, and were followed by the 21st Lancers. Mr. Winston Churchill, who went with them, says that at a quarter to six the enemy were sighted in the plain, "their numbers unaltered, their intentions apparently unshaken"—an observation which is to be explained by the expectation on the part of many British officers that the Khalifa, not having come on, would have fallen back during the night on Omdurman. He would have given much more trouble had he elected to do so. But while the cavalry patrols watched the long five-mile front of the Khalifa's army, masses of men, with thin connecting lines like big beads strung on a necklace, began to move forward. Their leaders galloped up and down before their ranks. They began to shout their battle-cry, and the noise came up in a great tumult. At six o'clock they were a mile from the ridge, and coming to join battle swiftly. Far out to the desert side, away from the Nile, was the green flag of Ali Wad Helu; next to it, inwards, the darker green flag of Osman Sheikh-ud-Din; over the middle, where Yakub and the Khalifa were, floated the Khalifa's great black flag; on the right, nearest to the river, were a very large number, perhaps 500, of white flags.

The advance began as if another larger upright were placed alongside the upright of Sorgham Hill, thus . But as the Khalifa's army advanced this upright, lengthening and bending forward, began to cross the plain between the two uprights, thus  , as if to turn the Sirdar's right

wing. Thus the Khalifa's left was advancing towards the Kerreri Hills; his centre was advancing on that part of Sorgham ridge where Sorgham Hill rose in the plain; his right (river) came towards the ridge where it descended from the hill towards the Nile. These last were the White Flags, and the force was 6000 strong. It was the intention of the Khalifa so to deploy his army that it would encircle the Sirdar's curve by a greater one, thus , and, according to the Khalifa's own prediction, drive it into the river. In more prosaic words, he meditated a frontal attack on the Sirdar's lines, and that expression sums up the task to which he committed his devoted army, and the failure to which it was foredoomed.

The Khalifa's left, some 20,000 strong, the Dark Greens and the Light Greens, marched toilsomely across the plain from one upright to the other, from the Sorgham ridge to the Kerreri Hills, out of range. The vanguard of the Black Flags came past Sorgham Hill and deployed so as to face the curve of the zareba; the Black Flag itself and the Khalifa, in reserve, halted under the shadow of Sorgham. The White Flags began to cross the low ridge between Sorgham and the river. Behind the White Flags, and between them and Omdurman, a smaller body of Dervishes was detached. Their purpose was to secure the Dervish army from being cut off from Omdurman, and their presence is to be noted because of a subsequent incident to which they contributed in the battle. It is convenient for the comprehension of the battle to analyse the Khalifa's dispositions, and as far as possible his intentions. They were marked by a rude strategy which might have been efficacious had the forces which he attacked been no better armed than his own. Having resort again to the diagrammatic illustration of uprights and curves, a few letters may be added to it, K signifying the Khalifa's reserves, W the

White Flags, G the Green Flags, and A A the frontal attack which the Khalifa ordered, thus:—

The frontal attack along A A was to be made with anything from 10,000 to 15,000 men, and was to be launched by the White Flags coming over the ridge, and by a much larger body under Osman Azrak, whose troops were largely drawn from Osman Sheikh Ed Din. If this attack succeeded, well and good. The Khalifa's troops, his best men, advancing from K, would help to complete the rout, and the Green Flags coming from G would complete it. If, on the other hand, Allah willed it that the Infidel Sirdar should secure a momentary triumph, and the frontal attack should fail, then cunning might effect what courage had failed to do. The Sirdar would no doubt endeavour to follow up his victory by emerging from his curved zareba and marching to Omdurman through the left-hand upright of Sorgham, and along the river. Then would the Khalifa, with the flower of his army, fall on them from behind Sorgham, while the Green Flags which had marched towards the other upright at Kerreri would assail them from behind. Thus would the Sirdar's army be assailed from north and south, and, encompassed on every side, would share the fate of that of Hicks Pasha. These assumptions having been appreciated, the frontal attack to which the Khalifa sent his Dervishes, though mad enough, was not without method. The madness appeared only when it was put into practice.

But to Kitchener's army drawn up in their thin flexible line, with unlimited ammunition to support it, the sight that met their eyes when the sun lit up the plain and the hills must have seemed almost incredible. They saw their own

cavalry patrols returning, they heard the rumour that the enemy was advancing, and still could not believe that the Khalifa, like a boxer who should deliberately lower his guard, had determined to attack their impregnable position instead of waiting for them to attack him. On the untenanted plain rows of dots began to appear; they resolved themselves into the flags of the enemy. The Khalifa's hosts began the battle with their weakest arm; they fired two shells, which struck the ground short of the zareba. At once the guns all along the Sirdar's front replied; one after another the batteries opened at 3000 yards, and the shrapnel began to burst over the heads of the advancing Dervishes, and to take its toll of their unshielded close ranks. But it was the White Flags, advancing nearest to the river, over the ridge of Sorgham, which received the full fury of the blast. They came on in a dense mass within easy distance and known range of the field-batteries and the gunboats, and as they crossed the ridge they came into full view of every artilleryman and nearly every rifleman. Twenty shells struck them while they were still raising their first cheer of exultation at the sight of their enemies. Their rifles were as useless as their spears or their banners, and the white flags toppled over in all directions as men fell by the hundred. Yet, as they fell, others took their places and they pressed on to within 800 yards, "a ragged line of men coming on desperately, struggling forward in face of the pitiless fire—white banners tossing and collapsing; white figures subsiding in dozens to the ground; little white puffs from their rifles, larger white puffs spreading in a row all along their front from the bursting shrapnel". Yet on their flank and in front of the Sirdar's curved zareba the Dervish frontal attack persisted, and the rifles and machine-guns joined in the easy slaughter. The firing began at 2700 yards, it fell to 2000 yards; it shortened till the whole front, from Guards and Seaforths to Maxwell's and Macdonald's brigades, were

firing. The rifles grew so hot that the firing-line exchanged them with the reserve companies.

Under the fire the Dervish frontal attack thinned and thinned, slowed and slowed, and withered away. The dense formations spread widely, as much because of the gaps mowed in them by the fire as from any tactical impulse, but they were powerless to reach the devastating firing-line. Opposite the British they never came nearer than half a mile. They got closer to the Soudanese because these were armed only with the Martini-Henry, and one man, keeping his flag flying to the last, was killed only 150 yards away. Osman Azrak, their leader, rode on till he fell. The attack, to use a phrase which has been rendered familiar in many sterner battles since, "collapsed under our fire". Perhaps 4000 Dervishes had been put out of action; the rest took what cover they could find in the folds of the ground, where they continued to snipe our lines till the shrapnel again began to search them out, and, when they rose to fly, handed over the task of killing them to the Maxims and the rifles again. A bloody, slaughtering business. Our losses were fewer than 160; 1 officer killed and 3 wounded.

A new decision devolved on the Sirdar. He must fall in —at his own initiative and in his own way—with the Khalifa's plan. He must get in between the Dervishes and Omdurman. The Khalifa had come out into the plain; in the plain he must be destroyed, not permitted to take what advantage the mêlée of street fighting in the town would give him. The Sirdar s decision was taken at once. The Arabs were out on the plain; he was on the river, and his would be the quickest way to Omdurman; so orders were given to take it. First, however, the cavalry must reconnoitre the way and ascertain if, and what, Dervish forces lay between the Sirdar's army and its objective. The task was committed to the 21st Lancers, who galloped first to Sorgham ridge, where the plain between

the ridge and the city lay revealed. On it were stragglers and scattered small parties, and a stream of wounded and fugitives and deserters, far in the distance, crawling back to Omdurman. Colonel Martin, in command, signalled for instructions, and was told by heliograph to advance and use every effort to keep the enemy from re-entering Omdurman. It is to be noted that the 21st Lancers were unaware of the position of the Khalifa's main body of troops hidden behind the hill of Sorgham. Colonel Martin was told by his patrols that in a broad, shallow water-way in front of them was a body of Dervishes about 1000 in number. This was the body of men, to which attention was drawn some pages back, detached by the Khalifa to watch his line of communications and protect it from being cut. They were Hadendoa tribesmen belonging to Osman Digna, though not commanded by him. When the Lancers emerged from the zareba on their mission their departure was noted by the Dervish watchers on Sorgham Hill, and the Khalifa, learning from them the probable intention of the British cavalry, sent some 2000 men to reinforce the Hadendoa. So that, though Colonel Martin had been told, not incorrectly at the moment, that there were 1000 men in the watercourse, or *khor*, by the time he was upon it the number had been increased to nearer 3000.

We are indebted to Mr. Winston Churchill for the most complete account of what followed. It was a characteristic Dervish ambush, which it is said that the Khalifa himself rode to witness, and, when afterwards told to Mahmud in Wady Halfa jail, brought a smile to that sturdy ruffian's face. As the Lancers approached the *khor* they saw in front of them only a small body of Dervishes, who neither fired nor shouted nor gave any hint of their intentions. This was odd enough to rouse some suspicions, and the Lancers prepared to ride round them. Instantly the blue Dervishes dropped on their knees, and from them, or from behind them, a scattered rifle-fire was

poured on to the Lancers. Horses and men fell. Colonel Martin saw that here was an ambush, and saw the larger body behind the blue skirmishers—but did not know how large it was, or suspect the true nature of the ambush, which was not *behind* the skirmishers, but *between* them and the Lancers. He wheeled his troops into line and gave the order to charge. The distance was short; the Lancers galloped hard in their first charge in war. Before the distance was half covered the whole aspect of the affair changed.

"A deep crease in the ground appeared where all had seemed smooth level plain; and from it there sprang with the suddenness of a pantomime effect and a high-pitched yell, a dense white mass of men nearly as long as our front and about twelve deep. . . . Eager warriors sprang forward to meet the shock. The rest stood firm to meet it. The Lancers acknowledged the apparition only by an increase of pace. Each man wanted sufficient momentum to drive through such a solid line. But the whole event was a matter of seconds. The riflemen, firing bravely to the last, were swept head over heels into the *khor*, and jumping down with them, at full gallop and in the closest order, the British squadrons struck the fierce brigade with one loud, furious shout."

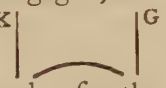
Men and horses fell together, and for the moment the shock dazed British and Arab. It was not till the cavalry struggled through on the other side that the fighting began, and then it was lance against spear and double-handed sword, and revolver against rifle. This hand-to-hand fighting lasted hardly longer than the actual impact and the clearance through the *khor* and the close ranks of the Arabs. Within two minutes the Lancers had passed right through and were clear on the Omdurman side. They went on for 200 yards, rallied, faced about, and re-formed, panting to cut their way back again. But the responsible officers forbade it. In those two minutes of primitive fighting man to man and steel to steel, 5 officers and 65 men, and 119 horses out of 400, had been killed or wounded. The Dervishes were not inexperienced in warfare against horsemen. They had hamstrung the horses, stabbed upwards at the

THE CHARGE OF THE 21ST LANCERS AT OMDURMAN

From a drawing by Frank Gillett, R.I.

riders, and cut them to ribbons with their two-edged swords. The Lancers had never used steel on a living man before—yet, as will be seen, the honours seem to have remained with them. Colonel Martin would not permit another charge. It was necessary that at any rate the Arabs should be turned out of their vantage-ground in the *khor*; so the Lancers were wheeled round to the Arab flank, where they dismounted and opened a heavy fire with their magazine carbines. The Arabs had to change front, abandoning the advantage of the lateral *khor*, to meet the fire. They prepared to advance, but they never did. Mr. Churchill says that there is no doubt the moral effect of the charge had been very great, and the enemy, brave as he was, had been shaken by it. At any rate the Arabs retreated towards the Khalifa, leaving the 21st Lancers in possession. It was a remarkable episode in the battle of Omdurman, and one, as it seems, detached from all the rest. It won the Victoria Cross for three of the participators in it—Trooper Byrne, who, though wounded and almost powerless himself, turned to rescue a wounded officer, Lieutenant Molyneux, from that ghastly mêlée; and Captain Kenna[1] and Lieutenant de Montmorency.

It was then half-past nine. The Sirdar had not waited for news from the Lancers, but had already begun to move towards Omdurman. He took the risk of moving with an undefeated army on his flank in order to secure the advantage of keeping that army from re-entering the town. But the risk was a great one. At the top of either upright of the diagram that has been suggested were Arab forces not yet engaged, and numbering in the aggregate 35,000 men, thus:—



where K stands for the Khalifa behind Sorgham and G for the Green Flag troops of Osman Sheik-ed-Din and Ali-Wad-Helu which had crossed the plain to the Kerreri Hills at dawn.

[1] Afterwards Brigadier-General Kenna, killed in Gallipoli during the Great World War.

The brigades, Lyttelton's, Wauchope's, Maxwell's, Lewis's, and Macdonald's, wheeled to the left and advanced in echelon; which is to say, that in the advance to the left of the original position each succeeding brigade covered, with its own left, part of the preceding brigade's right—much as a pack of cards is spread out on a table when partners cut for deal. One significant alteration was made in the order of advance by the orders of General Hunter, commanding the Egyptian brigades. In the zareba Macdonald had been nearer Omdurman than Lewis. But when the advance was ordered, General Hunter had a thought for the Arabs who had gone with the morning light to the Kerreri Hills with no one to shepherd them except Broadwood's Egyptian cavalry. He therefore decided that Macdonald's brigade, which had the best fighting-men, should come last, and gave orders to Lewis to precede him. Macdonald was strengthened with three batteries of artillery and eight Maxims. In order to permit of this manœuvre, the card in the pack which represents Macdonald was pushed farther out into the desert in order to allow Lewis to pass on the inside, and Macdonald was also, because of the gap produced by this change, a good deal behind the other brigades—an extra brigade's distance in fact. By a quarter-past nine the army was heading south for Omdurman, with the rear brigade double distance behind. Collinson and the transport had started already.

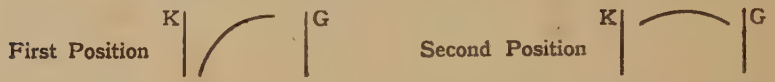
The British division marched first, taking the low ridge of Sorgham, and extending to the right towards the hill behind which the Khalifa's main body was lying. Lyttelton's brigade was nearest the river, Wauchope's on its right, and the two were almost parallel, instead of in echelon, as they approached Sorgham. As Maxwell's brigade behind them, and carrying on the line to the right, got near the rise of the hill, some snipers from the crags began to fire, but these the British troops disregarded, and went forward over the flat-topped

ridge whence Omdurman could be seen. Even as they caught the first glimpse of it they saw something else—the riderless horses which were the flotsam of the Lancer's charge, and, following these, the wounded. The sight momentarily turned all eyes away from what might be happening on the right; but attention was quickly recalled by the bang of a gun which began to shell the hill on their right where the Arab fire was growing lively. Then suddenly came the sound of firing from the rear of the British division. The battle had unexpectedly and suddenly developed a second phase.

The Sirdar was quickly aware of what had happened. Looking backward from where he rode on the right of the British division he could see that Macdonald, instead of following, had halted and was deploying for action. Hector Macdonald had caught sight of the Khalifa's men lurking on the desert side of Sorgham, and had swiftly realized that they meant business. He did not wait to be attacked. He at once unlimbered his guns—happy the precaution that had given him the extra batteries! Hardly had he done so when the whole of the Khalifa's reserve under Yakub came streaming, 15,000 strong, from their hiding-place, bringing with them the Black Flag and all the untamed pride and fury it denoted. They had but one brigade to overwhelm. It was their chance!

The crisis left the Sirdar unmoved. He ordered Maxwell's brigade, the third in the echelon, to front to the right and storm Sorgham Hill. Lewis was to come into line on Maxwell's right and so lessen the gap between him and Macdonald. He himself galloped up to the British division, which had halted without crossing the ridge, and sent the right half of it hurrying back to close up the gap between Lewis and Macdonald. Lyttelton's brigade was to take its place, change front, and support Maxwell's Egyptians. Lastly, Collinson's brigade was to close up behind Macdonald's right.

In short, Kitchener swung his army back from marching south in echelon into a line which faced west to meet the Khalifa's attack. Following the diagram adopted, the change might roughly be indicated as follows:—



The Sirdar's orders were accurately and swiftly obeyed, and Hector Macdonald's supreme coolness and steadiness stemmed the rush of Yakub's horde till the movements could be completed. Maxwell's Soudanese brigade, supported by Lyttelton, got up and over Sorgham Hill. Lewis began to come into action on his right, and these brigades, threatening the right flank of the Dervish attack, began to take some of the weight off Macdonald. There remained the gap between Lewis and Macdonald's isolated brigade; but this gap Wauchope's men were coming up at the double to fill. There were minutes of danger when the gap was yet unfilled, and when Yakub's men threatened to press what should have been a taut line into a pocket, or, in a modern phrase, to drive in a salient between the chief part of Kitchener's line and Macdonald. Enormous masses of Arabs hurled themselves towards the gap, but principally towards Macdonald's brigade. But Macdonald, facing first west, then south-west, then south, and always preserving the deadly efficacy of his fire, first stemmed and then shattered the attack of Yakub almost, by the steadiness and deadly certainty of his own brigade. By the time Wauchope had come up, the beginning of the end of the Dervish attack was reached. The new assault from Lewis and Wauchope completed it. Yakub's attack on Macdonald flickered out. The fire had swept his own ranks. The Emir Wad Bishara and many fine fighting leaders were dead, his men, so long undefeated, could stand no more. They began to crumple, even as the attack on the

zareba had crumpled. But they had been beaten before they began, for the Khalifa's attack had failed not only as an assault but as a tactical manœuvre. To have had a chance of success, Macdonald's brigade should have been assailed not merely by Yakub from Sorgham, but by Osman Sheik-ed-Din and Ali-Wad-Helu from Kerreri. But the Green Flags at Kerreri were too late. Their attack, which should have been contemporaneous, could, at the best, only follow now. The position might be indicated thus:

What had happened was that the force of Green Flags which the Khalifa had sent towards Kerreri had allowed themselves to become entangled with Broadwood's Egyptian cavalry, sent by the Sirdar to watch them. The Sirdar's orders to Broadwood, when the news first came that a hostile force was near Kerreri, were that the cavalry was to keep the enemy in front of him in the desert, and not allow them to work round to the right and so get behind the rest of the Anglo-Egyptian army. Broadwood therefore occupied the heights of Kerreri. But the moment he got to the top he found himself face to face, not with a force which he could hold in check, but with the combined masses of Ali-Wad-Helu and of Osman Sheikh-ed-Din, from 15,000 to 18,000 men, perhaps more. The position was critical, for Broadwood, besides being so gravely outnumbered, was encumbered with the Camel Corps. He had to make up his mind quickly, and he had to disobey the Sirdar's orders. It was significant of the complete understanding between Kitchener and his subordinates that he could do so, and could make his decision with the best results. Instead of falling back diagonally and inwards towards the river, he fell back in the opposite way away from Omdurman towards the north. If the two possible lines of Broadwood's retirement are indicated thus: ⋀, one would say that Broadwood followed the right leg of the ⋀ instead of the left. He

sent a galloper to the Sirdar to tell him what he had done. But he had little time. He was, in the literal sense, on the rocks, for his troopers as well as the Camel Corps were among the crags of Kerreri. The Camel Corps stumbled and floundered on the rocky hill-side; the horse-artillery could not gallop; and the Dervishes, seeing so fine a prize in view, pelted them with musketry-fire. Two guns lost all their gun teams and had to be abandoned; the Camel Corps was severely punished, and the cavalry, fighting a rear-guard action with their carbines, were very hard pressed. But the Egyptian cavalry redeemed the promise of the Atbara; it behaved magnificently, retreating in excellent order, and never offering the semblance of being broken. The Green Flags occupied Kerreri heights; but they still had Broadwood unbeaten to consider. He was the picador to the Dervish bull, and they could not resist the temptation to charge at him. In doing so they lost time; they paused from their proper task of falling on the Anglo-Egyptian right and of joining in the combined effort to demolish Macdonald's brigade. While they still paused, three of the gunboats came down stream and caught them with shrapnel. They drew back before the fire, and the intrepid Broadwood came at them again, to prick them back westwards into the desert.

Thus it was that the Khalifa waited, and waited in vain, his plans gone astray. But when the fury of the Khalifa's attack on Macdonald withered the Sirdar drove in his counter-blow. The three brigades on the Omdurman side of Macdonald advanced along a mile of front, their fire blazing and crackling in front of them. The 32nd Battery came up, and the Maxims began to stutter death sentences. In the middle of the long line rode the Sirdar, with hard face and frowning brows. The red flag of Egypt floated above him, and that conspicuous emblem was a mark for Dervish bullets; but he rode on without a thought except for his work, though some around him were

killed by bullets meant for him. Before that unbending man and his unbroken line the Khalifa's divisions crumbled. The ground was strewn with dead, and with wounded who struggled to their feet to kill or to be killed. Thousands of stragglers began to melt away towards Omdurman, the 21st Lancers, all too few, harrying the line of retreat. Yakub fell by the side of the Black Flag.

But now, when it was too late for victory or to stem defeat, yet powerful enough to threaten to take a heavy toll of the victorious, the dilatory Green Flags came into the picture. What appeared to be an entirely new army came down from the west of the Kerreri Hills. The Green Flag spearmen fell on Macdonald's brigade, and though Wauchope's brigade had been sent to strengthen him some time ago, these reinforcements were coming up on his left and not on his threatened right. The Lincolns were at once diverted, and sent to march round the back of Macdonald's hard-pressed men to strengthen the flank where the attack was fiercest. But in this second crisis, as in the first, Macdonald's temper and genius were at their coolest efficacy. To meet the Khalifa his brigade had been formed thus: , the longer leg facing the Khalifa's attack. To meet the new attack he changed front as deliberately as if on parade, so that the brigade now faced thus: . These manœuvres, so simple to depict, so complicated when involving 3000 to 4000 men, were carried out under a heavy fire and under the pressure of a fanatic enemy outnumbering him by seven to one.

The change of front from that which strangled the Khalifa's attack to that which stood up to the Green Flags was all done in less than half an hour. When it was done, three battalions of Soudanese bore the brunt of the whole fury of the last charges of the Dervishes. It was the wildest moment of the battle. If Macdonald was cool the Soudanese were not. It was impossible to control their fire. They knew fear no more

than their assailants, whom they would have welcomed with the bayonet, but they could not be restrained from blazing away their cartridges. Ammunition was perilously short when, with the Dervishes only 300 yards away, and gathering themselves for another rush, the Lincolns of Wauchope's brigade came up. It was time. The Soudanese were waiting with bayonets fixed for the next Dervish charge. They grinned a welcome to the Lincolns, and the Lincolns at once got to work, first with independent firing, then with section volleys. The Dervish masses halted, gaps were blown in them: they would not come on. They were beaten. But not all. Among the spearmen were left some 400 horsemen—the picked men, the body-guards of the emirs, and attached to the flag of Ali-Wad-Helu. Between them and the Soudanese was but a short distance. They gathered themselves together and hurled themselves across the gap. In vain. Their numbers diminished in the fire as they came on, so that they were now down to fifty, and now to thirty, and now to five; and now one only was left, and he died too before he reached the line.

The battle was over. After the failure of the Green Flags the whole Anglo-Egyptian army pressed forward towards the desert in a line two miles long, driving the shattered hosts before them. Broadwood's cavalry, coming back from their isolation towards the north, joined the line. At half-past eleven Sir Herbert Kitchener shut up his glasses, and, saying only that he thought the enemy had been given "a good dusting", gave the order for the brigades to cease firing and turn towards Omdurman.

In less than six hours, between dawn and midday, the Khalifa had lost his army and his dominion. The army had been blown by the guns to the winds of the desert. Its losses, computed and corrected later, were 9700 killed; wounded, from 10,000 to 16,000, of whom very many died in the heat and drought of the stricken field; and 5000 men yielded

themselves as prisoners.[1] The last fact ought to be mentioned, because it indicates that the Sirdar and the officers of the Anglo-Egyptian army did what they could to mitigate the brutalities of fighting in which neither the Soudanese nor the Egyptians were disposed to give quarter to an enemy himself without mercy and treacherous to the last degree as a fighter.

When the Khalifa saw himself beaten and broken he rode from the field towards Omdurman, and prepared to make a fight there. The war-drum was beaten, the *ombya* sounded through the streets of the city, but they called in vain. Those who entered the city entered it as fugitives with no more stomach for fighting, and a great mass of Dervishes—since the 21st Lancers were not strong enough to cut them off, but were none the less an obstacle to be avoided—streamed past Omdurman into the desert. If by a miracle the Lancers could have been converted into a brigade, or if Broadwood and his Egyptians could have been whisked over to reinforce them, the captures or the slain might have been doubled. Meanwhile the Sirdar, with the captured black flag of the Khalifa flying by the side of the Egyptian red one, was marching unhurriedly towards the city. At about three miles distance the army halted, the men were fed, the horses watered, the pursuit suspended.

Meanwhile the Khalifa in Omdurman was realizing that he was alone. It is said that he accepted the decision of fate with resignation, that he rested, and, after eating, went for the last time to the Tomb of the Mahdi. Not till four o'clock, as the Sirdar was on the threshold, did he leave the town, riding leisurely on a small donkey to the south, and taking with him his principal wife. Eight miles from Omdurman swift camels awaited him, and on these he rejoined what was left of his armies. With them, and not without honour among them,

[1] The total casualties in the Sirdar's army were officially computed at 194 British; native, 463.

he passed away to the south to renew the fight, no longer as an emperor indeed, but as a guerrilla. With him went Osman Digna, Ibrahim Khalil, who had ambushed the Lancers, and the Sheikh-ed-Din, whose leadership of the Green Flags had been a faithful failure. The cavalry set off in pursuit, but, though it was industriously persisted in, Colonel Broadwood had at last to return with little results and without the Khalifa, who travelled night and day till he reached El Obeid.

After the halt in the plain the Sirdar's army resumed its march, and at four o'clock Sir Herbert Kitchener, attended by his whole staff, and accompanied by the band of the 11th Soudanese, rode sounding through the town. He had not gone very far through its suburbs when three Dervishes, having turned their djibbahs,[1] came to beg for the lives of the people of Omdurman. They were told to bring the principal emir. An old man, white bearded, then came on a donkey, and brought with him the keys of the gates. He bowed his head to the dust, and the Sirdar spoke to him in Arabic, telling him that the lives of those who laid down their arms in Omdurman should be spared. Thereon the white-bearded mayor rose swiftly to his feet, kissed the hand of the conqueror, and joyfully hastened to spread the good news. The scene was to become even more mediæval, for almost on the moment the houses, which had seemed empty, spouted men, women, and children, who rushed towards the conquerors, kissing the dust from their sacred boots, and calling down on them every blessing that Allah could bestow. It was a demonstration, inspired, not, we fear, by joy at being freed from the Khalifa's rule, but by relief at finding that the Sirdar was not going to imitate its leading principles. His brother, Colonel Walter Kitchener, afterwards said he never felt so ner-

[1] The Dervishes wore djibbahs with simulated patches sewn on them in imitation of the ragged vestments of the Mahdi. They turned the garments so that the patches were inside and inconspicuous.

vous in his life as when he entered Omdurman with the Sirdar. He was not concerned for himself; he was nervous for the Sirdar's safety. He handled his revolver all the time, fearing a treacherous Arab at every corner with designs on Kitchener's life. The Sirdar, looking round, saw the revolver. "Oh, put it away!" he said to his brother; "there's no danger," or words to that effect.

But the ride was not without danger, for the inner walled citadel was not yet reduced. Arabs were still there to fight and fire at random, or from loopholes in the mud houses. Many lay dead there, for the gunboats had shelled the crowded place, and the sights and smells of the place were horrible. Women crowded about the Sirdar's horse, some men cast down their spears before him, others aimed at the cavalcade, and others fought in the side streets to the death. But he rode steadily onward through the confusion, the stench, and the danger till he reached the Mahdi's Tomb. The artillery had not entirely ceased to shell it, and one shell burst close to the Sirdar and his staff.[1] The Sirdar had to seek shelter from his own artillery till it had been stopped. He then resumed his ride through the town. Near the mosque his Soudanese escort was charged by two fanatics. He was the first to enter the prison. It was then dusk, and from out the foul gloom came Charles Nieufeld, the captive German trader, with shackled limbs, and almost crazy with joy. He had been a prisoner for thirteen years. From the prison the Sirdar went back to his head-quarters in the great square, and about him bivouacked the British brigades. The last picture that we have of him on that day is as he lies on his back on a bed and dictates his dispatch to Colonel Wingate, who writes it by the light of a solitary candle.

Mr. G. W. Steevens,[2] who saw that picture, denounces

[1] A succeeding shell killed Mr. Herbert Howard, a *Times* correspondent.

[2] *With Kitchener to Khartoum* (Nelson).

in words that are almost rhetorical the squalor, the filth, the foulness of Omdurman. The outskirts were mud streets of mud houses, no doors or windows except holes, usually no roofs. "As for a garden, a tree, a steading for a beast—any evidence of thrift or intelligence, any attempt at comfort or amenity or common cleanliness—not a single trace of any of it. Omdurman was just a planless confusion of blind water and gaping holes, shiftless stupidity, contented filth and beastliness." The main street was no better, a threadless labyrinth of tiny huts or shelters, too flimsy for the name of sheds; the Khalifa's own enclosure was even more squalid, an even more wonderful teeming bee-hive than the outer town itself. "Tiny round straw tukls, mats propped up a foot from earth with crooked sticks, dome-topped mud kennels that a man could just crawl into—lucky was the man of the Khalifa's guard who could house himself and his family in a mud cabin the size of an omnibus. On every side, of every type, they jumbled and jostled and crushed; and they sweated and stank with people." There were one or two larger houses; the Khalifa's own house was roomy, but since his subjects had looted every stick of furniture in it—leaving only a bath—it was impossible to say what it had been like when he dwelt in it. For the rest, the city of Omdurman, with its strange arsenal, its decrepit mosque, and its broken Tomb of the Mahdi, was no more than a vast and dreadful harem.

By the Sirdar's orders the Mahdi's Tomb, the dome of which had been shattered by lyddite shells, was razed to the ground and the ashes of the Mahdi scattered in the Nile. No act of Sir Herbert Kitchener was more criticized, and he was himself a grim auditor of a debate in the House of Commons in which he was fiercely denounced for this "act of barbarism". Never was criticism more misplaced. The Sirdar knew the Soudan, he knew the Arab, and he knew that had he left the tomb inviolate it would have become a place of pilgrimage

which the Infidel had not dared to destroy, and which would therefore become a rallying-point for the forces which Mahdism typified. By destroying it, Kitchener destroyed the fame and influence of a prophet, who was thus stamped as an unavailing impostor. If anyone, not knowing the East as Kitchener knew it, should remain dubious, then he may turn to a later act of Lord Kitchener of Khartoum for reassurance. When he had pacified the Soudan, it was at his bidding and by his influence that a new and great mosque was raised in Omdurman, to become the centre of the religion and the shrine of the Soudan.

The last act in the victory of Omdurman took place on the following Sunday. The Sirdar, with all his staff and with a detachment from every corps that had fought at Omdurman, or had taken part in the long campaign of which Omdurman was the culmination, took steamer up the Nile to Khartoum. In that dead city of rubble, where Gordon had been killed, the Sirdar came with the men who had helped in his task, to consecrate its fulfilment. A funeral service was to be held in memory of Gordon. It was fourteen years since he had been killed. For all those years no countryman of his had stood by his grave. Now in due time those who had avenged him, giving their strength, their blood, their best years to the work, were to stand side by side in his garden. There was Sirdar Sir Herbert Kitchener, who had been a major in the Intelligence Service while Gordon lived, and had risked his life to get news of him; there was Wauchope, who had been wounded at Tamai and Kirbekan; there was Macdonald, who had fought his way up from the ranks to Brigadier; Stuart Wortley, who had all but died at Gordon's side. There were men whose faces had been scorched and hair bleached in years passed under the Soudan sun; men who had not grown old but hard in the service; and many others, young men who had scarcely gone to school when the task of requital began—

for this was an army of young men. Perhaps, too, at that funeral service, we may fancy that there were the unseen, voiceless dead, who had shared in the task, but had not lived to see their share in it rewarded.

It was a strange journey. The steamers stemming the full Nile drew up at a desolate water-side shaded with tall palms. Beyond the crumbling quay rose Gordon's palace, its upper story gone, its blind windows filled up with bricks, and a rubble of bricks spreading all about it. There were the remnants of Gordon's garden—a yet more pathetic ruin, wrote George Steevens, than the palace. "The palace accepted its doom mutely; the garden strove against it. Untrimmed, unwatered, the oranges strove to bear their little hard green knobs as if they had been full ripe fruit. The pomegranates put out their vermilion flowers, but the fruit was hard and wooden and juiceless. It was all green, and so far vivid and refreshing after Omdurman, but it was the green of nature, not of cultivation. Reluctantly, despairingly it was dropping back to the wilderness. . . ." Khartoum had been nothing to the Khalifa but a brick-yard.

The Sirdar and his generals stood in the open space in front of the palace, the troops about them in three sides of a square. On the roof were two flagstaffs with signal halyards, and by one stood a British naval and a British military officer. By the side of the other were the Sirdar's Egyptian aide-de-camp and a British officer of the Egyptian army.

The Sirdar raised his hand, and up one flagstaff ran the Union Jack, the island kingdom's flag. A gun banged from the gunboat, and from the Grenadier Guards' band crashed "God save the Queen", while every man, from Sirdar to private, stood to the salute. Another gun, and the band of the 11th Soudanese rang out with the Egyptian Khedival hymn, the guns marking time. "Three cheers for the

Queen" spoke the Sirdar's deep voice, and the helmets went up with the cheers.

A hush fell after the shouting, and the Guards' band, with their muffled drums, rolled out the Dead March, and when that was over there fell a deeper silence still. The four chaplains, Father Brindle, the Rev. J. M. Simms, the Rev. A. W. B. Watson, and the Rev. O. S. Watkins came slowly forward and ranged themselves before the Sirdar. The Presbyterian chaplain read the fifteenth Psalm; the Anglican spoke the Lord's Prayer; Father Brindle read a memorial prayer, standing bareheaded in the sun; and last of all the band played "Abide with Me". Then one by one the Sirdar's generals stepped out, each according to his rank, and shook their leader's hand. It had been a long road he had led them; it had taken nigh on fourteen years. What wonder if in those minutes that iron heart of his melted and he had no words that he could utter. He had come, not to the end of his task, but to the side of Gordon, who at last lay not in solitude or friendless in the waste Soudan, but under the uplifting flag of his own people.

E. S. G.